Hafa Adai!

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Revenue projections to be revised—again

Due to the loss of Northwest flights

We continue to give the Legislature the chance to get the austerity measures in place; if not, then the governor will have to reduce hourly compensation for the contract workers.

—Press secretary Charles Reyes

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The Fitial administration is poised to revise yet again the $148 million projected revenue collections for Fiscal Year 2009 in light of Northwest Airlines' decision to use smaller aircraft and cancel nighttime flights from Osaka and Narita. These developments mean fewer tourists to the CNMI and lesser income for the government, press secretary Charles P. Reyes Jr. said yesterday.

"We don't know [the reduced amount] yet but they have to do a calculation based on the anticipated lower tourist arrivals. It makes sense; if Northwest cuts flight capacity, that means fewer tourists and fewer revenues for the government," Reyes said.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial has until today to act on the $156.76 million budget bill for FY 2009 passed by the Legislature,

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ON POSSIBLE VETO ACTION BY FITIAL

House override on budget likely

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

House Ways and Means Committee chair Ray Yumul yesterday said the consensus of the House leadership is to go for an override of Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's budget veto as he said he would.

"But since we need 14 votes, some of the minority members have to also vote in favor of override. We are contacting certain minority members for their support at this time," Yumul said.

Rep. Tina Sablan also hopes the 20-member House will have enough votes to override Fitial's budget veto.

The governor has until today to act on the second budget proposed by the Legislature for fiscal year 2009.

The proposed budget is

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NMPASI temporarily takes over Family Hope Center

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Family Hope Center will now be temporarily operated by Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. after the Council for Developmental Disabilities transferred its management from the Association of Family with Disabilities.

Thomas J. Camacho, the governor's special assistant for disability policy and programs, announced the move, saying the Fitial administration is now looking for new operators—not only for the center but for its Call-A-Ride program as well.

The Call-A-Ride program was previously run by the Pacific Development Inc., which returned its management to the council due to funding shortfall.

Camacho did not disclose why the Association of Family with Disabilities is giving up control of the Family Hope Center.

"The council made the decision to transfer the temporary management of the center to

See NMPASI on Page 4

TÊTE À TÊTE CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Faculty and staff of the Northern Marianas College enjoy lunch in the college courtyard after the ribbon cutting ceremony for newly renovated Building M. on Friday. Joining them is NMC Foundation president Vicente "Ben" Babauta, far right and NMC Board of Regent member Agnes McPhetres (third from right). From left is William Castro, director of OIE; Glenn Keaton, Math/Science instructor; Will Maui, Business instructor; Agnes McPhetres, NMC Regent; Dr. Debra Cabrera, director of Academic Programs and Services; and Babauta.

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Should Article 12 of the CNMI Constitution be placed on the ballot in 2011?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

133 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Extra Time
Jay Capelle would give anything to get back his job. At the same time, he's grateful to have extra time on his hands.

BUSINESS...Page 14

Grammy Awards
Robert Plant and Alison Krauss' unorthodox partnership yielded rich rewards on Grammy night.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 19

Local

Commission to NMC: Make public all reports

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, which recently placed the Northern Marianas College on continued show-cause status, wants all accreditation reports shared by the college's management to its students and the public.

This was what ACCJC president Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D., told NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez in a Feb. 3 letter, when it affirmed the show-cause extension to NMC.

"The commission requires that all reports be made available to students and the public," Beno said, adding that NMC could place copies in the college's library or have it placed on the website for effective dissemination of information.

She said the report will become part of the accreditation history of the college and should be used in preparing for the next comprehensive evaluation.

The commission also required that students and the public be informed about how NMC was evaluated by the visiting team. It wants the team evaluation report be distributed in the campus.

Since January 2008, three reports were already submitted by the college to the accrediting body: a self-study report in March 2008; a final self-study in October; and a supplemental report in December 2008.

Beno explained that show-cause is issued when the commission finds an institution in substantial non-compliance with the commission's eligibility requirements, accreditation standards, or policies.

She said if the loss of accreditation will likely cause an institution to close, during the show-cause period, the institution must make preparations for closure based on its policy.

In order to avoid possible termination of accreditation, she said, NMC must demonstrate its resolution of the two remaining recommendations.

'Effective budget plans, proper evaluation'

"The college should review existing planning processes in order to establish and implement a shared vision for the future of the college with agreed upon priorities," Beno said.

These priorities include development and implementation of budgeting and resource allocations guided by institutional needs for human resources and services. It must also include the two centers on Rota and Tinian in the planning; and integrates all aspects of planning, evaluation, and resources allocation.

Beno added that reports must also rely on faculty and staff participation. The reports should also be well-documented and widely distributed.

Saipan Tribune learned that the team again recommended that NMC institutionalize a coordinated, systematic process for evaluating program effectiveness.

"This process should include definitions of learning outcomes for all programs, a determination of program relationships to labor markets, and objective measures of student performance, which can inform and guide decisions to improve programs," Beno said.

She disclosed that under U.S. Department of Education regulations, institutions out of compliance with standards or on sanction are expected to correct deficiencies within a two-year period or the commission must take action to terminate accreditation.

While the same recommendations were identified as deficiencies in year 2006 and 2000 evaluation teams, she said NMC was provided a time extension to correct the deficiencies for good cause.

"The college has completed a significant amount of work to resolve these issues and has hired outside consultants to assist it in designing its process for program review, student learning outcomes, identification and assessment, and strategic planning leading to an integrated planning model," she said.

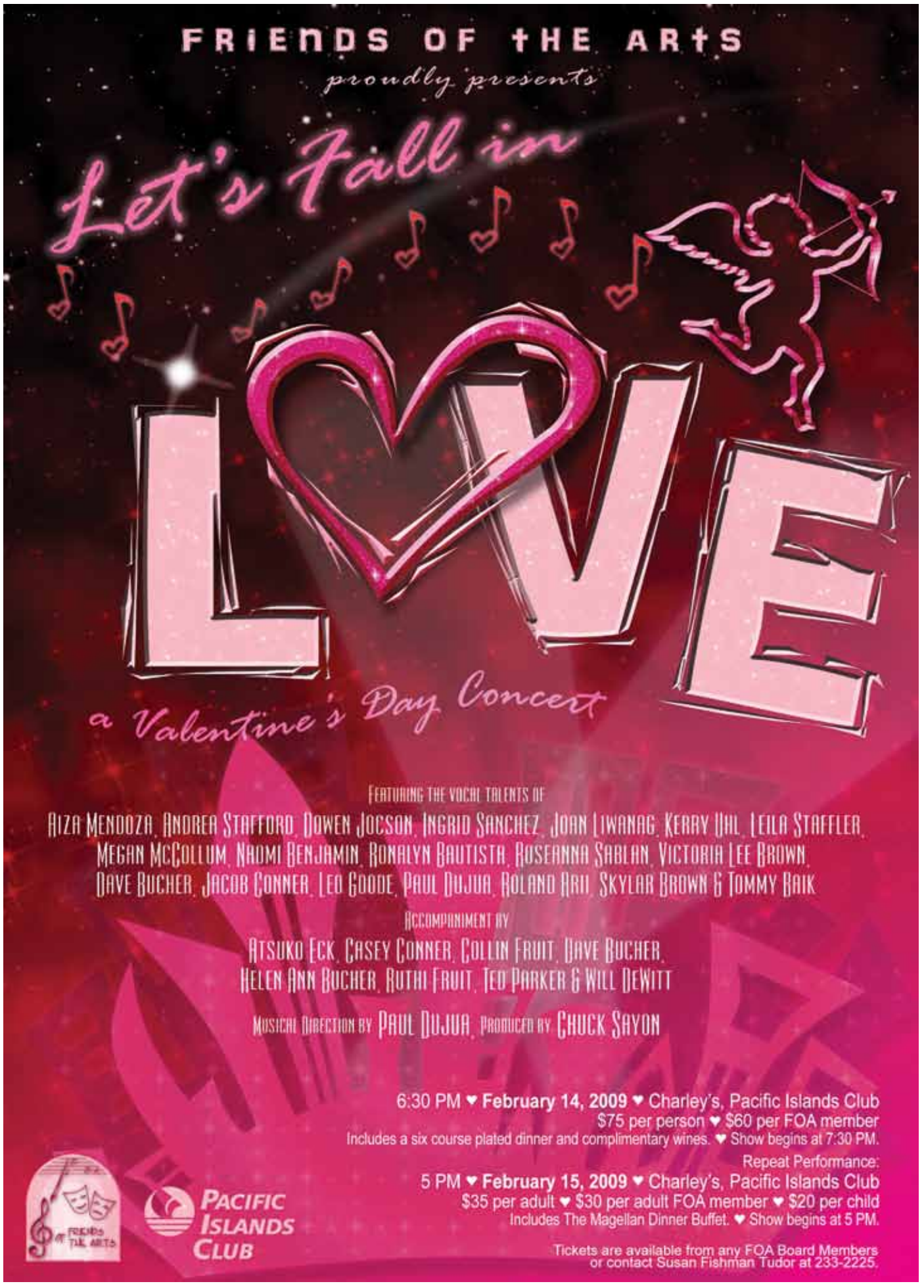
Beno said NMC is also awaiting the OIA's approval on funding to be used to retire bonds issued for campus development.

"I wish to express continuing interest in the institution's educational programs and services. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring integrity, effectiveness and quality," Beno added.

She said a decision whether to terminate or re-affirm NMC accreditation will be known in June following the commission's assembly.

Meanwhile, NMC is asked to submit by April 1, 2009, its final report on the two remaining concerns of the accrediting commission.

CLEARING CREW HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
Master diver Jon Klukas, standing second from right, joins 12 of the 15 U.S. Navy divers who are part of the harbor clearance operations team that removed over 80,000 pounds of dangers to navigation from the Saipan channel and Tanapag harbor, along with the crew of the USNS *Safeguard*.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'Charges vs Villagomez, Santoses sufficient'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The two charges in the new indictment against Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez and couple James and Joaquina Santos sufficiently describe the offense of bribery filed against them, according to a federal government prosecutor.

In the U.S. government's response to Villagomez's motion for a bill of particulars, assistant U.S. attorney Eric O'Malley argued that the sufficiency of an indictment is not determined by whether it can be "more" definite or certain.

O'Malley said a bill of particulars is not needed if an indictment provides detail sufficient to inform the defendants of the charges against them and full discovery of evidence has been provided.

A bill of particulars refers to a list of written statements made by a party to a court proceeding, upon demand of the other party. The list itemizes details of a claim or defense.

O'Malley said counts four and five of the superseding indictment provide ample detail of the charges levied against Villagomez and the Santos couple.

Moreover, the prosecutor said, the U.S. government has turned over, or has made available for inspection, all documents related to the case currently in its possession. He said the U.S. government will continue to do so as additional discovery is received.

The superseding indictment charged Villagomez and the Santos couple with bribery concerning a program receiving federal funds, conspiracy to defraud and to commit offenses against the U.S., wire fraud, and theft concerning a program receiving federal funds.

Villagomez

The new indictment alleged that Villagomez accepted a $15,000 bribe from the Santos couple for approving the purchase of Rydlyme, a cleaning and descaling chemical, for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. The couple was also charged with bribery for allegedly offering the $15,000 to Villagomez.

The three defendants pleaded not guilty.

Guam attorney David J. Lujan, in Villagomez's motion for a bill of particulars, argued that the bribery charges are based on conjecture and speculations by the U.S. government.

Lujan said the U.S. government alleging that Villagomez received two checks and making the "giant leap in logic" that it constitutes bribery with no factual basis places him in an impossible situation in preparing his defense.

The Santos couple joined Villagomez's motion.

In the U.S. government's response, O'Malley said an indictment is sufficient if the allegations contain every element of the charged offenses, if they fairly inform the defendants of the charges against them, and if they enable them to claim an acquittal or conviction to bar future prosecutions for the same offenses.

As drafted, O'Malley said the two bribery charges satisfy these requirements.

The U.S. government lawyer said one bribery charge alleges that Villagomez acted as an agent of the CNMI government or of its agency, specifically as CUC executive director; then as lieutenant governor exercising de facto control over CUC.

He said the charge alleges that Villagomez corruptly accepted $15,000 from the Santos couple.

O'Malley said Villagomez was rewarded for causing CUC to buy Rydlyme for a value of at least $30,767.

The charge also alleges that CUC received more than $10,000 in federal money during all one-year periods, including January 1998 to January 2008.

"This sufficiency alleges the crime of bribery concerning a program receiving federal funds as to Timothy Villagomez, informs him of the nature of the charges, and will allow him to claim double jeopardy in barring future prosecutions for this offense," O'Malley said.

With respect to the other bribery count, O'Malley offered the same arguments.

He argued that the charge alleges that the Santos couple corruptly gave $15,000 to Villagomez with the intention of rewarding the lieutenant governor in connection with the purchase of Rydlyme.

$270K salary for 2 CHC doctors OK'd

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial has certified the over-the-cap salary of two physicians at the Commonwealth Health Center.

In a Feb. 3 letter to the presiding officers of the Legislature, Fitial granted his approval to allow Dr. Michael Koning and Dr. Michael Hart to each receive an annual salary of $270,000, which exceeds the $50,000 salary cap set by the Compensation Adjustment Act.

Koning and Hart are anesthesiologists at CHC.

Public Law 8-6 requires the governor to certify and approve an annual salary exceeding the $50,000 per annum cap.

"By copy of this letter, I am also advising the chairman of the Civil Service Commission of this certification," the governor added. ***(Haidee V. Eugenio)***

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Rota lawmakers want action on long-delayed gymnasium

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Members of the Rota Legislative Delegation yesterday met with Public School System officials and administrators where they discussed the much-delayed construction of a gymnasium that will serve the three schools on Rota.

Sen. Paul Manglona, along with delegation members, called the school officials' attention and the respective PTAs on Rota to once and for all determine the factors that are delaying the project.

"This project has been delayed for many years…and we're wondering why?" he told *Saipan Tribune* moments after the meeting on Rota yesterday.

Manglona disclosed that Rota students are deprived of a safe and proper facility for their sports and outdoor activities.

"The money is there…the plan is complete. But it's not moving even an inch. We want to ask PSS and BOE what took them so long to build this project here on Rota?" he asked.

The senator said that in order to stimulate the economy on island, better facilities would also need to be constructed.

Rota is optimistic that the military buildup in Guam would economically benefit the island.

Present at yesterday's meeting were BOE member Tanya King, PSS CIP coordinator David Loan, PTA officials from three schools, principals and administrators.

Manglona disclosed that nearly $900,000 is available for the Rota gymnasium, which has been damaged by a typhoon seven years ago.

These funds were sourced from Public Law 16-24, which earmarks $250,000 for the school project and $540,000 that's approved by local lawmakers under Rota legislative resolution 15-12. In addition, the senator said some $300,000 is still available from FEMA funds that could also be used for the gym project.

After the meeting, Manglona said they are elated at the positive turnout of the "negotiation."

"PSS, through the CIP coordinator, has promised to hire professional services to move this project," he said, acknowledging the "limited" manpower at PSS as a result of budget constraints.

Other school projects such as leaking roofs and collateral classroom equipment for other schools on island were discussed by participants.

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Registration opens for 28th Flame Tree Arts Festival

Registration for the 28th Annual Flame Tree Arts Festival will begin tomorrow, Feb. 11, 2009, according to a statement issued yesterday by the Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture.

The annual arts festival is scheduled to be held this year from April 23 to 26, 2009, at the Civic Center in Saipan. The Flame Tree Arts Festival features diverse cultures from the region and abroad, ranging from traditional and contemporary visual, to performing and culinary arts.

Registration will be open on Wednesday at the Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture on Capital Hill, located next to the Post Office building. Registration costs are $100 for traditional/visual artists, $100 for information booths, $300 for non-profit organization, and $600 for food/business vendors. Registrants must submit copies of their business license, food handlers' certificate, and non-profit charter, if applicable. Artists must be registered with the Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture.

"In addition to celebrating the diverse cultures represented on the islands, we encourage vendors to register early, as we have only 20 food vendor slot and 60 other slot available," said the CCAC statement.

For more information about the Flame Tree Arts Festival, contact the Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture at 670-322-9982/83 or e-mail marianasarts@pticom.com. ***(PR)***

Archbishop Apuron to celebrate 25th Jubilee Feb. 19-21

The Archdiocese of Agana will celebrate the 25th anniversary of Archbishop Anthony Sablan Apuron's Episcopal ordination from Feb. 19 to 21.

The archbishop was ordained a bishop at the Dulce Nombre de Maria Cathedral 25 years ago, Feb. 19, 1984.

There will be several events and masses this month but the major island-wide celebration will be the Archbishop's Mass of Thanksgiving set on Saturday, Feb. 21, 11am at the Dulce Nombre de Maria Cathedral-Basilica.

Archbishop Apuron is also making the jubilee a time to celebrate other joyful aspects of the Church, including vocations and the men and women who have committed themselves to serving God in priestly and religious callings.

The archdiocese will ordain four seminarians to the diaconate on Thursday, Feb. 19, 6pm.

Mass for vocations to the diaconate, priesthood, and consecrated life will also be held on Friday, Feb. 20, 6pm.

All jubilee ,asses will be celebrated at the Cathedral-Basilica. ***(PR)***

NMPASI

From Page 1

NMPASI so as to avoid the program from shutting down," he said.

The Family Hope is a one-stop center on Saipan. Families and guardians of children with disabilities are provided immediate assistance like transportation and information necessary for persons with disabilities.

Camacho, in admitting that NMPASI cannot hold the program for long, said the council is in the process of reorganizing itself to effectively carry out its mandates and programs.

Besides the Call-A-ride and Hope Center, the council is also supervising the "trankilu financing" and the "assistance technology" programs.

Saipan Tribune learned that each program receives federal funding assistance to supplement the nonprofit groups' operations.

For Call-A-Ride, the operator receives up to $120,000 annually, while the Family Hope Center operator gets $150,000-$200,000.

Once transferred to nonprofit groups, these federal grants will also be automatically transferred.

Now that the Hope Center has been returned, Camacho said that plans to establish Rota and Tinian centers may not push through.

"That's why we need to find a nonprofit group that will continue the service. This is a unique program that we're hoping will continue here," he said, citing the important role it plays to the "special population."

Camacho said this is the Family Hope Center's fifth year of the cycle grant.

"The NMPASI takeover is to make sure that it will not shut down," he said, adding that federal assistance will be recalled once the program closes.

'Call-A-Ride transfer pushes through'

The governor's special assistant said that the DD Council is finalizing the scope of work for the Call-A-Ride proposed RFP.

Camacho said some of the specific requirements for the new Call-A-Ride operator include a good background in transporting people; must be in the transportation business; sensitive enough to serve the special type of client; must comply with the needed medical trainings like CPR; and has the financial capability to run the program in a longer time.

Last year, the administration said it wants the Call-A-Ride operation transferred to a nonprofit group and free the DD council from its operation after some "fiscal mismanagement" was uncovered by the council during the leadership of Tony Chong, who was placed on administrative leave until his contract was not renewed.

Since 2006, long-term sustainability plans for the Call-A-Ride were identified but have not materialized. These include the increase in its fee and opening up the riders' eligibility for other non-disabled clients. The Council charged $2.50 per segment of service to client.

Camacho said the administration couldn't afford to shut down the program—as a result of the "poor management"—as many depend on the services provided by Call-A-Ride.

The program has two buses for Saipan and one each for Rota and Tinian.

There are approximately 80 clients that benefit from the Saipan service on a daily basis, according to Camacho.

HOUSE

From Page 1

$156.76 million, which includes $148 million in projected local revenue collections.

House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios said that signing the budget does not prevent the governor from implementing cost-saving measures. He said the Legislature has already cut costs while the Executive Branch continues to hire people for non-critical positions.

"You can't expect employees who have worked for 10 to 12 years to have continuous cuts in salaries and at the same time continue to hire more people not holding critical positions. It's not appropriate," he said, adding that there should be some sense of consistency in implementing belt-tightening measures.

The Senate has yet to come up with a consensus, according to Senate President Pete P. Reyes.

"We will wait for the governor's official communication," he said.

Sen. Maria "Frica" T. Pangelinan, chair of the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee, hopes her colleagues will carefully consider the available options if the budget bill is vetoed. She pointed out that, even with the governor's proposed austerity measures, the government cannot avoid deficit spending unless hiring is curtailed and a budget is passed.

Pangelinan said the budget that is on the governor's desk matches the revenue estimates from his latest official communication.

She said if the governor has knowledge of further declines in revenue estimates, he is required to inform the Legislature about it so it can be dealt with.

Fitial vetoed the last Legislature-approved budget of $165.4 million, citing an $8 million drop in projected local revenue. He then slashed government budgets across the board by 5.5 percent for the rest of the fiscal year.

Austerity measures already in place

Pangelinan said the austerity measures as proposed by the governor are not going to save enough in personnel costs to avoid overspending in FY 2009, particularly if hiring is not strictly controlled.

"The reality is that current economic conditions demand smaller and leaner government. We cannot have it both ways," she said.

Pangelinan said House Bill 16-213 uses attrition as the main tool for lowering personnel costs.

"The majority of positions which are vacated may not be filled. There would be a freeze on new hiring. There are certain exceptions which are clearly delineated, designed to preserve the provision of basic public services. Expenditure authorities are expected to make decisions about how to not exceed their appropriations," she said.

The senator said she cannot support putting 64-hour workweeks in place while allowing hiring to continue without strict controls. Current employees of the government would be dealing with the impact of reduced wages while their losses fund new salaries, she said.

'A disaster'

Pangelinan said operating under continuing resolution has been a disaster.

"FY 2008 ended with $173 million in spending under a continuing resolution of $160 million. After some final adjustments and the last minute arrival of $17.2 million in a cover over settlement from the IRS, the fiscal year ended with no operating deficit. It was good fortune, not good planning," she said.

The projected revenue for FY 2009 is $148 million for general fund operations and approximately $8.6 million in other resources, totaling just under $157 million. With this knowledge, according to Pangelinan, the first quarter ended with trends that forecast the spending of $180 million.

"The continued practice of overspending simply makes no sense. The only reasonable course is to get a budget in place that will put a stop to it. The budget bill that's on the governor's desk does just that. I hope that my colleagues will carefully consider the available options if HB 16-213 is vetoed. What we know as fact is that 'business as usual' is not working," she added.

REVENUE

From Page 1

which includes $148 million in local revenue collections.

Fitial last week said he would veto the budget bill, citing the lack of austerity measures.

House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios said yesterday an override of the governor's veto is likely, while Senate President Pete P. Reyes said he didn't have the general consensus of the senators yet as of yesterday. ***(See related story)***

Palacios said the governor is mandated by law to revise revenue projections if needed.

"He did it [revise revenue projections] once, twice but that's within his statutory mandate. …Even if the budget is passed today but the projections need to be revised tomorrow because of projected downward amount of resources, then the governor is mandated by law to make proportionate cuts in allotment in every branch, across the board," he said.

Press secretary Charles Reyes said when the FY 2009 budget was deliberated on, Northwest's flight reductions were not factored in.

"As the situation develops, the governor can always submit revised estimates for Finance, which is in charge of that," he added.

In December, Fitial vetoed the Legislature's first budget plan of $165.4 million, citing an $8 million drop in projected local revenue, and urged the Legislature to include austerity measures in any future budget measure.

After the veto, the governor slashed government budgets across the board by 5.5 percent for the rest of the fiscal year to reach $156 million, which would allow the government to finish the year in the black.

The House Ways and Means Committee used the proportionate reduction as a model for the revised budget of $156.76 million, which includes $148 million in local revenue collections. The House and the Senate passed the revised budget bill; the governor has yet to act on it.

Fewer tourists

Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio said last week that Northwest Airlines will use a 182-seater B757 aircraft from the current 298-seater A330 by March 29.

In May, Northwest will cancel its nighttime flights from both Osaka and Narita in Japan.

Tenorio said that, based on a 75 percent local factor and with an estimated $827 in direct and $2,709 in indirect economic impact per Japanese visitor, the CNMI will lose 26.8 percent of its total air seats by Northwest, and $51.341 million and $168.118 million in direct and indirect economic opportunity, respectively, by the end of FY 2009.

"The loss of the Northwest Osaka-Saipan flight means 20 percent fewer air seats from Japan. That's a tremendous loss from our major tourism market," Tenorio said.

The loss of airline seats, coupled with exclusion of Chinese and Russian tourists from the federal visa waver program and the continued dip in visitor arrivals from Korea, will result in a revenue loss of $339 million annually, the MVA chief added.

Reduction in force

Finance Secretary Eloy Inos warned that the government may have to resort to other "radical means" including but not limited to a reduction in force if there is no workable legislation that will authorize the implementation of measures such as austerity Fridays and unpaid holidays.

Inos, in a financial report to the governor, said the government spent $4.511 million more than the allotted $39.281 million for the first quarter of FY 2009.

The funds were allotted based on the continuing appropriation level of $156.703 million.

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2009, when the 5.5 percent budget cut was not in place, the government spent $43.793 million for the first quarter, which, if left unchanged, could result in an overspending of as much as $27.088 million for the year.

Inos said it is imperative that the government institute immediate austerity and other cost-cutting/saving measures at the earliest possible date.

Reyes said the government may also have to reduce compensation to contract workers but not civil service employees.

"We continue to give the Legislature the chance to get the austerity measures in place; if not, then the governor will have to reduce hourly compensation for the contract workers, not civil service employees. We also reserve the right to implement a reduction in force and he tried to do that before, but called it off after the Legislature…adopted austerity measures," the press secretary added.

Reyes added that 2009 being an election year makes it more difficult to implement austerity measures.

FOR $10K-$15K A MONTH

Mariana House in DC to be leased out—OPA

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Due to the unfavorable real estate market, the CNMI government is going to keep the Mariana House—the former Washington Representative's Office building in Washington, D.C.—as an investment and earn $10,000 to $15,000 in monthly rental once it is leased, according to Public Auditor Michael Pai.

In order to lease the building, Pai said it will have to be repaired and brought to compliance with the Washington, D.C. area building code.

The initial estimate to get the house into rentable shape is $25,000 to $35,000.

Rep. Ray Yumul, chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, yesterday said a minimum of $120,000 in annual income from the building rental is better than selling the asset at a low price at this time.

Pai, in a letter to Senate President Pete P. Reyes and House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios, said a realty company has already been contacted to maintain and lease the building.

The Legislature earlier passed Resolution 16-64 for the Office of the Public Auditor to do a close-out audit of the Washington Representative's Office.

Pai, OPA legal counsel Nancy Gottfried, and OPA audit manager Ross Zapanta met with Finance Secretary Eloy Inos on Jan. 29 to discuss the assets of the Washington Representative's Office.

The assets include a 2004 Toyota Sequoia and a 2006 Dodge Caravan; the Marianas House building; and the contents of the Marianas House.

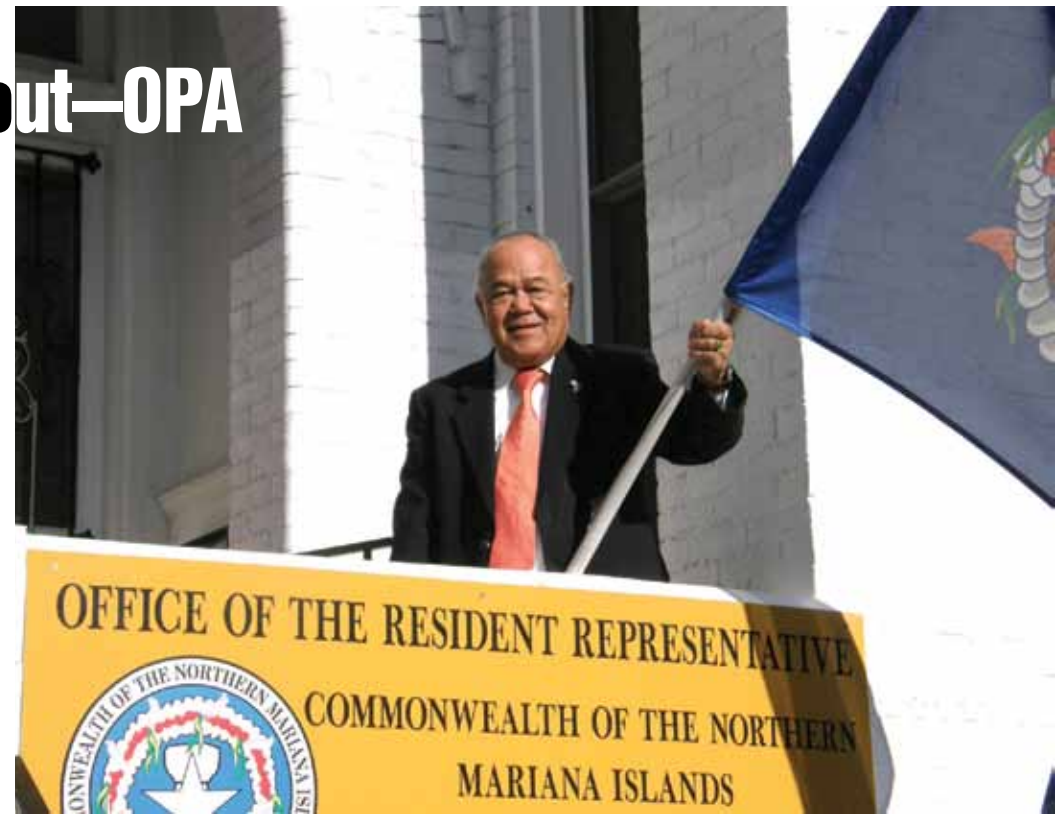
The public auditor said the vehicles are to be sold, but the selling price may have to be reduced to take into account the effect of the sales tax, which the purchaser would be responsible for. No sales taxes were paid on the initial purchase of the vehicles by the Washington Representative's Office due to its being a government entity.

Pai said much of the contents of the Mariana House have already been disposed of through sale to other government entities such as the government of the Federated States of Micronesia or by donation to 501(c)(3) entities that were willing to pick up the furniture.

"Some items still remain in the house as they are too large to be removed without damaging the structure. The realty company will either have those pieces removed o will leave them for the use of the lessee," Pai said.

Yumul, in an interview, said Delegate Gregoro "Kilili" Sablan had asked if there are some items of value from the Mariana House that could be transferred to his office for "safekeeping."

Pai said the Finance secretary is expecting to receive a report detailing the results of the disbursements and receipt of funds related to the disposition of the Washington Representative's Office assets.



In this Jan. 4, 2009, file photo, the last CNMI Resident Representative to Washington, Pedro A. Tenorio, brings down the CNMI flag that was displayed daily at the entrance to the Marianas House in Washington D.C. The Office of the Resident Representative has been abolished with the enactment of P.L. 110-229, which finally granted the CNMI a Delegate to the U.S. Congress.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Help continues to pour in for dead worker's 2 kids

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Donations continue to pour in for the two minor sons of a contract worker who passed away on Feb. 2 after battling a serious medical condition.

Geraldine Amor, who sought the community's help for her trip home, died two days after arriving in the Philippines from Saipan.

She left behind two sons: a 1-year-old and a three-year-old now in the care of her aunt, Remy Amor, on Saipan.

Her last employer of record eventually paid for her airfare and that of her medical escorts, costing about $8,500.

The donations collected by her relatives and civic groups led by the Overseas Filipino Workers Support Group and the Marianas Association of Filipino Architects and Engineers helped in the funeral expenses at home and her two sons.

Lito Marquez, chairman of the OFW Support Group's welfare services, said they were able to raise $4,231 from individuals and groups here and abroad as of Saturday. But donations continue to pour in even though the collections have already stopped.

"This just shows that people do help others in times of need. We are thankful," Marquez said.

On Sunday, for example, they collected an additional $388. The Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs led by president Melvin Malvar, Irene Santiago and Jhun Banadera personally handed a $250 check to Remy Amor. The remaining amount came from individuals.

Of the funds raised, $ 2,600 had been sent to the Philippines, while the remaining amount will be used to temporarily assist the deceased's children.

Geraldine Amor had been ill for months until she was confined in the intensive care unit of the Commonwealth Health Center on Jan. 19. She was diagnosed with lupus, an autoimmune disease that can affect various parts of the body, including the skin, joints, heart, lungs, blood, kidneys, and brain.

Because of her medical condition, her contract was not renewed on Dec. 10 when it expired, forcing her to seek the community's help for her to return home. Geraldine Amor worked on Saipan for five years.

Her relatives and friends on Saipan and the Philippines, along with the OFW Support Group and MAFEA, expressed thanks to all those who donated to Amor's cause.

Turtle Research Database System set for launch

HONOLULU, Hawaii and APIA, Samoa—A seven-year effort to develop a Pacific region database on sea turtle research will culminate with the launch of the Turtle Research Database System on Feb. 17 at the 29th Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation in the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Australia.

TREDS collates and standardize marine turtle data and is critical to understanding population trends throughout the Pacific. The launch event will include a briefing, demonstration and questions-and-answer opportunity. CD copies of the database system will be distributed.

Over the last few decades, various institutions throughout the Asia-Pacific and the Pacific Islands region have been tagging turtle and collecting a variety of data. While these efforts generated large volumes of information, there was little overall coordination of the work. In 2002, based on recommendations from participants who attended the Western Pacific Sea Turtle Cooperative Research and Management Workshop, the Hawaii-based Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council began coordinating and supporting the development of TREDs.

The central database for the Pacific Islands region will be housed at the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program in Apia, Samoa, and plans are underway for a second central database to be managed by the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center-Marine Fishery Resource Development and Management Department in Malaysia. Together these agencies will manage and consolidate turtle research data for their 31 member countries in the Pacific Ocean.

TREDS can store tag information (flipper, PIT, and satellite), nesting beach and foraging ground data, clutch and hatchling information, and biological sampling (such as genetic data). It can systematically inventory tags used per project, generate project-specific and/or site-specific summary reports, and help standardize data collection protocol.

TREDS is a joint initiative of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, SPREP, SEAFDEC, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service-Pacific Islands Fishery Science Center and the Marine Research Foundation in Malaysia. ***(PR)***

Labor to new alien workers: No orientation, no permit

The Department of Labor has been conducting hearings for the revocation of work permits issued to alien workers who entered the CNMI after Jan. 1, 2008, and failed to attend an orientation session within a week of arrival. The cutoff marks the effective date of Public Law 15-108, the new labor reform law.

"We gave these workers two weeks in which to complete the orientation requirement and those who failed to do so have had their entry permits revoked and have been repatriated," according to Labor Deputy Secretary Cinta Kaipat.

The new labor reform law, which was authored by then Rep. Kaipat, requires orientation for every alien worker entering the Commonwealth.

Labor conducts orientation sessions for newly arrived alien workers every Tuesday mornings since the regulations became effective on Feb. 1, 2008.

During the sessions, foreign workers hear a presentation on their rights and responsibilities under CNMI law. Labor personnel question them about their job situation.

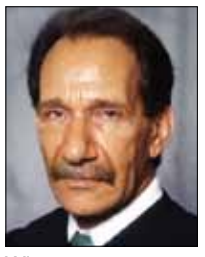
"We have discovered workers entering with phony documents, workers entering with no employer, workers entering with documents describing one job but the actual work appears to be a different job, and many variations on these themes," Kaipat said. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

SCHOOL WALKATHON FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Parents walk with their children during the recent walkathon at the San Vicente Elementary School's baseball field. Parents and many businesses supported the school's fundraising event.

Wiseman gets 7th year as federal court designated judge

For the seventh consecutive year, the U.S. Courts for the Ninth Circuit has appointed Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman as a designated judge for the U.S. District Court for the NMI.



Wiseman

Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Alex Kozinski designated Wiseman to serve as a judge in the federal court beginning Jan. 1, 2009, and ending Dec. 31, 2009.

Wiseman said yesterday he is pleased with his seventh consecutive appointment as a designated judge.

He said he appreciates the confidence placed in him by Judge Kozinski and U.S. District Court for the NMI chief judge Alex R. Munson.

"I welcome the opportunity to continue serving the people of the CNMI in this role of a designated U.S. District Court judge as well as in my position as an associate judge of the CNMI Superior Court," Wiseman said.

"I will endeavor to continue to serve in both capacities with honor and distinction," he added.

Wiseman's first six-year term on the bench as judge expired in March 2007. But in November 2005, voters allowed him to continue to serve as a judge until March 2013.

The 2005 election made Wiseman the first non-indigenous judge to capture a CNMI retention poll. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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Fund warns employees on disability coverage

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund has warned employees that both local and federal laws apply in claiming disability coverage with the pension fund.

Fund administrator Mark A. Aguon, in a memorandum to all department and activity heads on Friday, disclosed that certain individuals are claiming some form of disability to receive monies from the Retirement Fund.

However, employees who withdraw their employee contributions from the Fund divest themselves of any interest they have in the retirement agency, including the disability coverage, Aguon said.

He explained that local law mandates that the employer provides treatment, care, and vocational rehabilitation services, while the Americans with Disability Act also requires the employer to make reasonable accommodations for disabled employees to include light duty, if necessary.

Aguon said human resources offices are encouraged to make employees aware of the applicability of these federal laws to their personnel.

He also disclosed that the U.S. Social Security Administration provides supplemental security income to disabled individuals under the age of 65. Popularly called the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, Aguon said the same law is applicable to the CNMI through the Covenant.

"Individuals asserting a disability interest from the Retirement Fund must also comply with applicable Commonwealth law which the Fund vigorously upholds," Aguon said in the memorandum, adding that local employees should also be informed of their inclusion in this federal benefit program.

The administrator said that employees' withdrawals of their contributions from the Fund have implications for the employees which are far from the instant availability of the funds received.

"The Retirement Fund is a pension fund based on the annuity received from the employee and employer. Employer's failures to remit their fair share of their contribution serve to diminish their employees' interest in their annuity," he explained.

He said annuity is a shared obligation of both the employer and employee.

"The Retirement Fund is a co-shared annuity pension fund rather than a welfare fund," Aguon said, adding that employees whose employment relationship is funded—in part or in whole—by federal funds do have the option to contact the proper federal authorities.

Alleged overstaying worker on Rota moves to Saipan

The Superior Court has ordered an alleged overstaying alien worker on Rota who moved to Saipan to appear in court this Thursday for a deportation hearing.

Associate Judge David A. Wiseman directed Elvis B. Tibong to explain in court why he should not be deported from the CNMI.

Wiseman issued the order to show cause after the Division of Immigration filed a deportation case against the 31-year-old Tibong.

According to court documents, Tibong, a Filipino, used to work as a farmer, then became a mason.

Immigration investigator John Peter stated in his report that Tibong's nonresident worker's entry permit expired on April 17, 2007.

Peter said Tibong has overstayed in the CNMI for over one year now.

Peter said Tibong's employer from Rota called him last November to inform him that the worker wanted to move to Saipan for look for a new employer.

The investigator said the employer expressed concern because the worker may have lied and was hiding on Saipan with his girlfriend.

Apparently, the girlfriend is also an alleged overstayer. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
RFQ09-GOV-035

Central Garapan Waterline Replacement

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the CNMI Water Task Force, are soliciting statements of qualification (SOQ) from licensed architectural and engineering firms (A&E) for the Design of the Central Garapan Waterline Replacement Project, Garapan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The full Request for Qualifications (RFQ) documents may be obtained by contacting Pedro Sasamoto, WTF Program Manager, by telephone at (670) 664-2274 or by email at psas@saipan.com. All questions concerning this proposal shall be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 pm, January 27, 2009 to Mr. Sasamoto by facsimile at (670) 664-2279.

The design and construction of the Central Garapan Waterline Replacement Project is made possible by a grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Commerce. All element of the construction process shall meet standards of the EDA. The EDA grant is matched by a grant from the Office of the Insular Affairs (OIA), U.S. Department of the Interior and requires a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance.

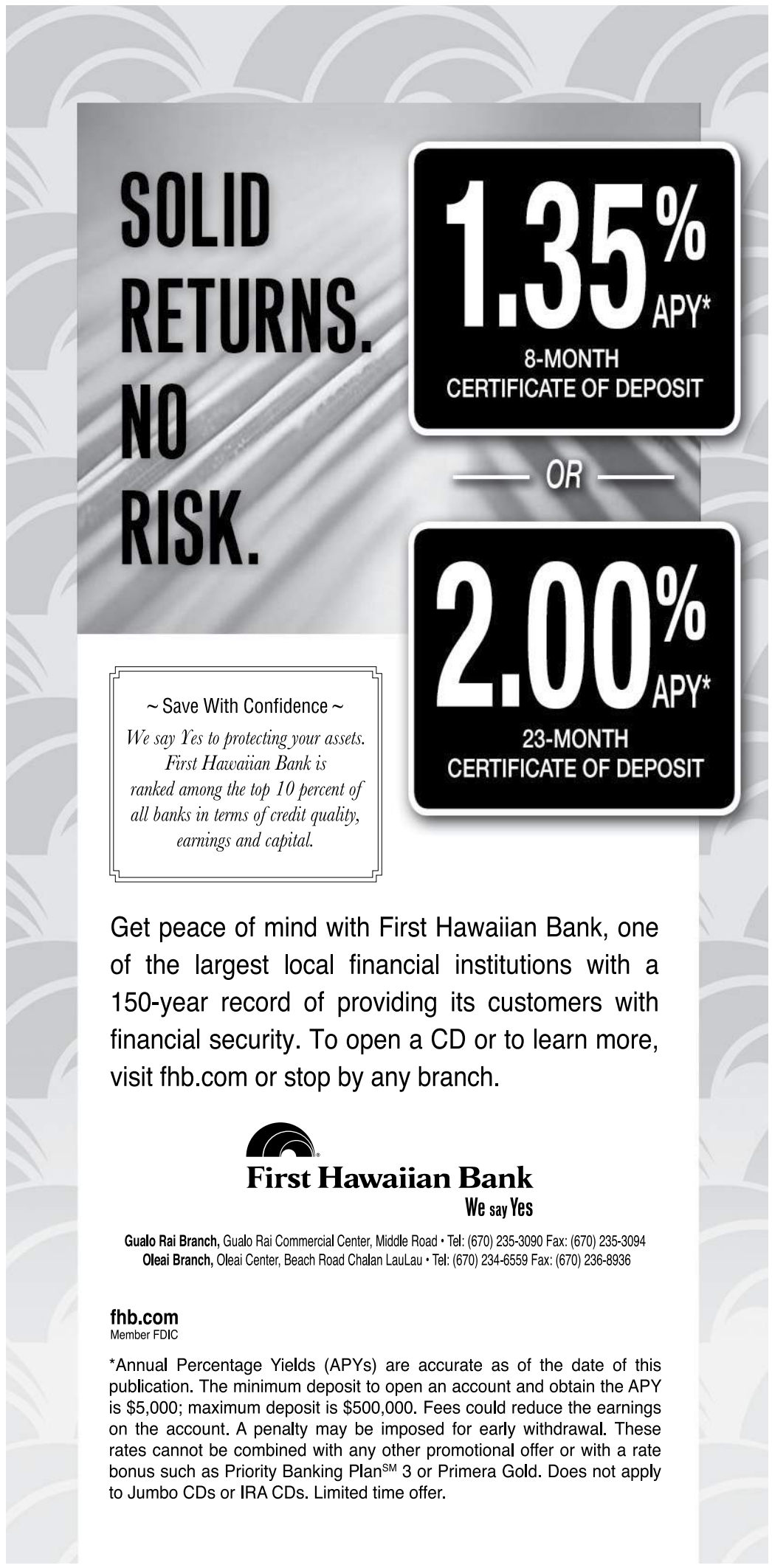
One original and four (4) copies shall be submitted to the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than **2:00 PM, (CNMI local time), on February 13, 2009**.

The SOQ shall be marked **"Central Garapan Waterline Replacement Project, RFQ09-GOV-035"**. For firms within the CNMI, one (1) original and four (4) copies of SOQ must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than **2:00 p.m. (CNMI local time), on February13, 2009**. Firms located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a **Notice of Intent to Propose**. Notices of Intent to Propose must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than **2:00 p.m. (CNMI local time), on February 13, 2009**, and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515 or email procurement@pticom.com. For firms located outside the CNMI, one original and four (4) copies of SOQ must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **February 13, 2009** AND must be received no later than **February 25, 2009**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a proposal.

The CNMI reserves the right to reject any and all SOQ and to waive any imperfections in any SOQ if to do so shall be in the best interests of the CNMI. All SOQ shall become the exclusive property of the CNMI government.

Timothy P. Villagomez
Lt. Governor

Herman S. Sablan
Director, Procurement & Supply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Make-A-Wish Foundation has 2 new board members

TAMUNING, Guam—The Make-A-Wish Foundation of Guam Board of Directors recently elected two new members to its organization. Jina Rojas and Andy Tidwell joined the board effective February 2009. Both have extensive experience working with non-profit organizations.

Rojas is vice president and general manager of Distinctive Distributors. In the past she has worked to coordinate events with the Sacramento and Northern California chapters of the Make-A-Wish Foundation. She brings with her over 12 years of experience working with non-profit and social service organizations.

Tidwell is founder and CEO of Couture Marketing—a full-service marketing and public relations firm with offices in Guam, Saipan and New York City. Tidwell was recently nominated as Guam Business Magazine's "Executive of the Year". Prior to his move to the region four years ago, he held a strong relationship with the Foundation's San Francisco chapter where he helped organized many successful events while working in the Bay Area media.

Tidwell

Rojas

"I welcome Ms. Rojas and Mr. Tidwell to the board," says Make-A-Wish Foundation board chair Phillip Santos. "Each of them brings enthusiasm and experience to our organization and we look forward to having them as part of the Make-A-Wish team."

The Make-A-Wish Foundation of Guam board welcomes these two new members as they chart the course for many more wishes to be granted.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation grants the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy. The Guam chapter services the islands of Guam and the Northern Marianas. For more information about the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Guam, visit its website at www.guamwish.org or call (671) 649-WISH. ***(PR)***

2009 CNMI

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Tel. 234-5498 ext. 1010; carolynh@nmcnet.edu
or **Ms. Les Ogumoro-Uludong**
Tel; 234-5498 ext. 1019; logumoro@nmcnet.edu

This Event was Organized by the CNMI Farmers Support Group and sponsored by:

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Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

February 10, 2001

House joins fight against abortion

In a strong statement advocating pro-life, the House of Representatives is set to adopt a resolution supporting a month-long campaign by various church organizations on the islands against abortion. The House leadership will be part of the efforts to raise awareness in the community on the need to safeguard the life on a mother's womb, according to House Floor Leader Oscar M. Babauta. Different church groups have joined hands to mark January as "Celebration of Life Month" with various activities, including a prayer vigil and a march to be held next weekend. The resolution will be adopted tomorrow at the start of the House regular session, Mr. Babauta said, adding it will endorse the campaign initiated by the church coalition.

Police probes shareholders of firm in savings racket

Police investigators are set to begin questioning the remaining shareholders of Long City Traders Corp. to shed light on the savings scam that victimized hundreds of garment factory workers on the island. This developed as Kwan Y. Chung, 53, the biggest shareholder of Long City Traders, has reportedly fled Saipan. Long City Traders is a jewelry shop that also offers financial services. Garment factory workers were duped into depositing their money to the company in exchange for higher interest rate. Due to the huge number of garment factory workers who were victimized by the savings scam, police gave out questionnaires to the garment establishments to be distributed to their employees to facilitate the gathering of information, according to Department of Public Safety spokesperson Rose Ada.

February 10, 2002

Pierce shuns conditional lifting of hiring ban

Sen. Joaquin G. Adriano's proposal to raise the CNMI's minimum wage in exchange for the lifting of the moratorium on the hiring of non-resident workers is a "recipe for disaster." Thus said Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Richard Pierce, who added that the Chamber has already made clear its positions on both the moratorium issue and the increase in wage levels in the CNMI. "The Chamber wants the moratorium lifted and we are against any real cost in the operations of our businesses at this time," said Pierce. "I believe that [Adriano's] idea to exchange increased costs to businesses in exchange for the lifting of the moratorium is a 'recipe for disaster.'"

Wanted: Federal security directors for US airports

The United States Department of Transportation disclosed yesterday that it has started recruiting federal security directors who will oversee security operations in various airports across America. USDOT Secretary Norman Y. Mineta said the hiring of federal security directors who will oversee security at the nation's top airports as part of the new Transportation Security Administration has begun. He said a federal security director will lead security operations at each airport, including passenger and baggage and cargo screening, as well as protection of aircraft and secured airport areas.

February 10, 2003

$1M disaster checks out

Good news to Rota residents: Federal disaster checks are already out in the mail. The Federal Emergency Management Agency disclosed yesterday that it has released checks amounting to over $1 million in individual assistance to Rota residents. The money is part of the over $1.4 million that FEMA has already approved for release to Rota residents for housing and other needs assistance, said FEMA public information officer Josie Pritchard. Of this amount, FEMA has granted some $656,000 for housing assistance, while other needs assistance has already reached $760,000. A total of 408 residents have filed their application for disaster aid with the federal agency. Some 273 residents have already trooped to FEMA's disaster recovery center on Rota, Pritchard said.

Chamber backs reduced work-hour bill

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce wholeheartedly supports and endorses the proposed legislative initiative to reduce local CNMI government expenditures by reducing the number of hours of service provided by government employees. Chamber president Richard A. Pierce said that, since he assumed the Chamber post, we have been pleading with the local government authorities to look at its largest expenditure cost, its payroll." Pierce added that the Chamber understands the political ramifications of a move like this, "but we cannot stress enough the admiration we hold for those House members that have proposed this measure to rescue the government from financial insolvency."

Advertising Supplement

Diabetic eye care center marks 1st anniversary

One year ago, Marianas Eye Institute held the grand opening of its Center for Advanced Diabetic Eye Care, located at its main office on Beach Road in Garapan. The Center introduced $200,000 worth of the latest technology to help battle the devastating effects of diabetic eye disease. Since its opening, the Center has had an impact on the lives of many CNMI residents.

"We brought together the key pieces of technology required to treat diabetic eye disease all under one roof," explained Russ Quinn, CEO of Marianas Eye Institute. "Since the opening of the Center for Advanced Diabetic Eye Care, hundreds of people have benefited from the convenience of being able to get advanced care right here on Saipan." Providing world-class eye care in a local environment is one of the major accomplishments of Marianas Eye Institute.

Khorram

Quinn

Blindness Prevention

Dr. David Khorram, the ophthalmologist and medical director of Marianas Eye Institute, completed his ophthalmology training under world-renown retinal specialist, Dr. Lee M. Jampol.

"Dr. Robertson and I see island residents coming in for the first time, blind from diabetes. It doesn't have to be this way," he said. "The key to preventing loss of vision is for diabetics to get their eyes checked at least once a year by a trained eye-care professional."

The World Health Organization, under its Vision 2020 initiative, has aimed to control eye disease, and diabetic retinopathy is among the top of the list.

"Unfortunately, diabetes rates in the CNMI have been climbing, and many people feel that loss of vision is just part of diabetes or of aging. It's not. Early detection though annual eye exams, and early treatment can save your vision, and the Center for Advanced Diabetic Eye Care at Marianas Eye Institute allows us to do this more efficiently and cost-effectively, which is important when people are struggling," said Khorram.

Helping those who cannot afford care

CEO Quinn discussed the financial strain on the people they treat. "Studies have shown that if people come in for the annual exams, and follow the doctor's recommendations, they keep their vision much longer than those who neglect their eye care. But many people don't come in because they're afraid of the cost. We want everyone to get the care they need, and our Eye Foundation Fund helps take care of expenses."

Dr. Khorram added: "We want to give diabetic eye care to everyone, whether you can afford it or not. Everyone with diabetes deserves excellent care, irrespective of their ability to pay for the care. It's tragic that some people go blind because they can't afford to pay. At Marianas Eye Institute we won't let finances stand in the way of you getting the care you need. That's our commitment to our community."

International Recognition

Marianas Eye Institute's commitment to advanced technologies has gained recognition in various national and international publications. Since the opening of the Center, Marianas Eye Institute has been featured in *Ophthalmology Times, Medscape, Retinal Physician* and *Ophthalmology Management*.

"The international publicity we've received has been amazing, especially given our location," said Quinn. "We work hard to let the islands' people know that the care we provide is truly outstanding. We want them to be confident in the quality of care at Marianas Eye Institute. So, we were very pleased that a prestigious magazine like *Retinal Physician* recognized us this year as "one of the best equipped eye clinics in the Asia-Pacific region.'"

The Technologies

There are an estimated 4,000 people with diabetes in the CNMI. Diabetic retinopathy is a microvascular complication of diabetes. The condition is a leading cause of new onset blindness. The staff at Marianas Eye Institute, using the newest technology, are able to detect the early onset of diabetes and work closely with individuals' primary caregivers to screen and treat this disease.

Last year's investment in the Center brought the latest equipment in the battle against this debilitating eye disease. Equipment such as Ocular Coherence Tomography or OCT has provided a breakthrough in scanning the eye. This equipment provides detailed color CAT-scan like images that help detect and treat retinal disease and other disorders like glaucoma. The Digital Retinal Photography & Fluorescein Angiography is a high resolution camera designed to capture images inside the eye with amazing detail.

Another piece of equipment purchased during the rollout of this important eye care center was the Advanced Cataract Removal System. This, along with the small incision technique, allows gentler cataract surgery, and faster recovery.

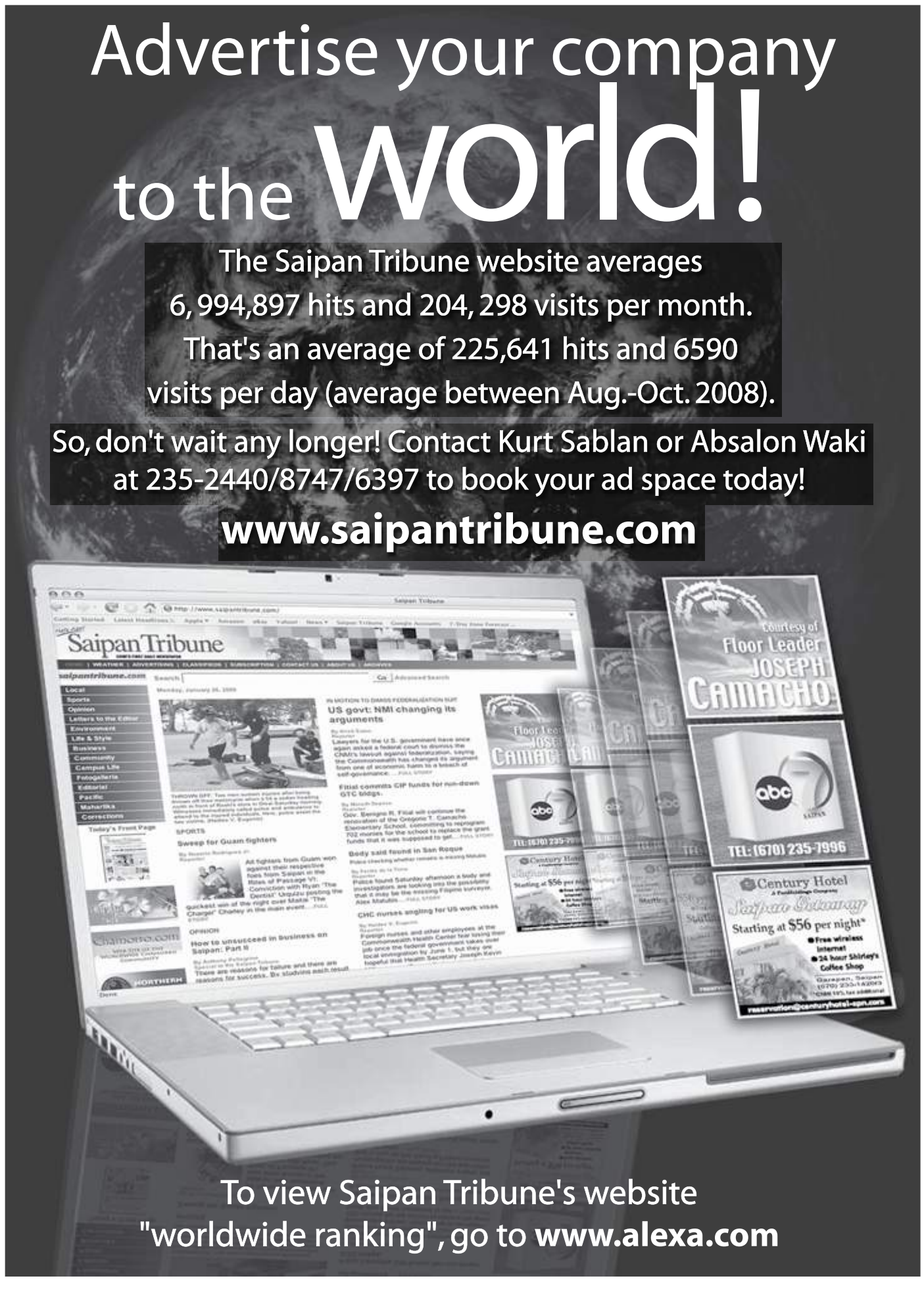
"Diabetics get cataracts at a younger age, and this technology makes it possible to remove the cataract with an outpatient procedure and get people back to work within a day," said Khorram. "The advances in technology are remarkable, and we're pleased to have brought them all together in the Center for Advanced Diabetic Eye Care at Marianas Eye Institute."

Savings for the government

In addition to the health benefits, the Center for Advanced Diabetic Eye Care helps the CNMI government save countless dollars in off island referrals. "With advanced technologies, we are able to take care of even severe problems here on Saipan," said Khorram. "We still rely on medical referral for some of the very complex cases, but the number has decreased with the newer treatments and technologies."

Quinn states: "We are proud of the services we can offer the community. We have a great combination of talented locally trained and certified staff, capable doctors—both Dr. Robertson and Dr. Khorram have received national recognition for their work in eye care—and state-of-art technologies. It is all part of our mission statement: *Excellence with Love*."

Marianas Eye Institute is located on Beach Road in Garapan, across from 13 Fishermen's Monument. The center provides total eye care for the family, with one-hour glasses, contacts, medical eye care, surgery and laser. Most insurance is accepted, and walk-ins are welcome. ***(PR)***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EDITORIAL

Saving the banks

As last week's dreadful new unemployment report showed, the U.S. economy is still in free fall. But, important as it is, the fiscal stimulus plan upon which President Obama and Congress have spent most of their efforts so far is at most only part of the solution. The economy can't recover as long as the nation's financial system remains in suspended animation. Through episodic bailouts, the Bush administration prevented a total meltdown—which was necessary, but far from sufficient. As it prepares to unveil its plans for the second half of the $700 billion Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP), the Obama administration has a chance to dispel the confusion and uncertainty that still cripple the banks and, by extension, the entire economy.

The basic problem is this: America's financial institutions remain burdened with "toxic" assets, i.e., instruments (often of mind-blowing complexity) for which the market has collapsed. Goldman Sachs says that about $1 trillion in illiquid securities still haunts the banks' balance sheets. The resulting paper losses are eating away at the banks' capital, and without a stable capital cushion, banks do not dare lend money, even to quite creditworthy customers. As long as the toxic assets remain, private capital will shun the banks—and government capital will get eaten up by more and more losses. One way or another, this corrosive uncertainty must end.

Broadly speaking, the Obama administration has three options, each of which has been tried in similar crises in other countries.

First, it can nationalize insolvent banks, take their bad assets directly onto the government's balance sheet and try to manage them at a minimum cost to the taxpayer. This has the advantage of decisiveness—but the huge disadvantage of involving political authorities in the banking business indefinitely.

A second approach would be for the government to use TARP money to capitalize one or more "bad banks," which would buy and—with the help of experts recruited from the private sector—manage toxic assets, thus freeing the remaining "good banks" to resume normal operations. This is more promising, since it includes an exit strategy for the government and might jump-start a private market for the assets. But there is a huge risk that the government would badly overpay in the first place.

Finally, the government could agree to pick up the tab for any losses above a certain level, in return for a fee from the banks. It has already done this with Citigroup and Bank of America. With this guarantee, the banks could more safely hold the securities to maturity or sell them to private investors, who would be secure in the knowledge that Uncle Sam's got their back. This proposal probably has a much lower upfront cost than either nationalization or a "bad bank." The downside is that it perpetuates ambiguity about the ultimate valuation of the assets.

Whatever approach, or combination of approaches, he chooses, Mr. Obama must level with the public about the costs and benefits. One misconception he should dispel is the expectation—unfortunately being encouraged by some members of Congress—that the banks must immediately use whatever aid they get to restore lending to pre-crisis levels. Easy credit is part of what got us into this mess, and, even without the toxic assets problem, there would be less lending in a recession. No, it's not fair that banks that helped create the crisis might get a fresh start subsidized by taxpayers. But, unless we want a Japan-like "lost decade," there is no alternative. What's crucial is to set a strategy that is coherent, decisive and transparent—and then stick to it.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

OK, WHERE DO WE GET THE ADDITIONAL REVENUE TO PAY FOR ALL THIS STIMULUS?
FIRST, EXPAND THE CABINET...
NEW NOMINEES FOR
DEPT. OF TOXIC ASSETS
DEPT. OF CEO PAY CONTROL
DEPT. OF SHOVEL-READINESS
DEPT. OF DIRE STATISTICS
DEPT. OF PONZI-SCHEME RECOGNITION
DEPT. OF DIGITAL TV CONVERSION
DEPT. OF PEANUT RECALL
DEPT. OF CARBON FOOTPRINTING
DEPT. OF GIRL SCOUT COOKIE WEIGHTS & MEASURES
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TREVER

A Russia reality check

By FRED HIATT
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Hiatt is The Washington Post*'s editorial page editor.*

MUNICH—As European leaders listened joyfully here to the Obama administration's first expressions of foreign policy, nothing pleased them more than Vice President Biden's vow "to press the reset button" in relations with Russia.

When it came to Russia, the mood among the premiers, foreign ministers and other pooh-bahs gathered for the annual Munich Conference on Security Policy was: Why can't we be friends?

Over the past year, Russia has invaded the sovereign state of Georgia, parts of which it continues to occupy; cut off natural gas to parts of Europe during the depth of winter; sold weapons to Iran and Venezuela; and otherwise made itself disagreeable. As with issues involving Iran, the Middle East, Afghanistan and elsewhere, many Europeans, and some American participants, too, seemed to hope that, with George W. Bush gone, maybe the thorniest problems involving Vladimir Putin would melt away, too.

Biden, to his credit, did not indulge any naive hopes, with regard to Russia or foreign policy in general. He cheered everyone with promises of "a new day" but warned U.S. allies that President Obama would be asking "for more from our partners, as well." The new administration would have its differences with Russia, he said, most notably by opposing "any nation having a sphere of influence."

But his overall tone on Russia was hopeful, as he promised that the administration would "revisit the many areas where we can and should be working together with Russia." That left many of his listeners hoping for a "grand bargain" that would mollify the Russian bear.

It's certainly worth trying for improved relations—British Foreign Secretary David Miliband noted after Biden's speech that Russia's "incentive to be a partner" may be greater now that oil prices have fallen so precipitously—but also worth asking what such a bargain might entail.

The West's wish list is long: for starters, Russian help in fighting terrorists, defeating the insurgency in Afghanistan, corralling loose nukes, and restraining the nuclear ambitions of North Korea and Iran.

Almost since the Soviet Union collapsed more than 17 years ago, U.S. officials have been telling themselves that cooperation in such areas is graspable because their goals should be Russia's goals, too: Russia, they say, can't want fundamentalist insurgency to its south or new nuclear powers along its borders. For just as long, the Russians have not acted as though they are so sure their interests coincide: Sometimes they have helped, sometimes sabotaged, often promised just enough to keep the Americans begging for more. The past few days offered a typical performance: expressing sympathy for U.S. goals in Afghanistan while persuading Kyrgyzstan to boot U.S. forces out of an air base crucial to the Afghan war effort.

So what might Russia want, as distinct from what Americans think it should want? Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov, speaking to the conference the day before Biden, talked mostly about arms control, including the START treaty that the Bush administration had no interest in and that will expire in December. Faced with an American president committed to the treaty process and to the goal of reducing nuclear arms, the Russians may lose some of their enthusiasm. But it is certainly worth finding out.

Many of the Europeans here talked in oddly psychological terms, as if what Russia wants most is respect, understanding for its fall from empire, indulgence of its irrational fear of encirclement. If so, all the better; of course Russia should be treated with respect.

It seems more likely, though, that Russia is acting more on what it perceives as its interests than out of accumulated hurt feelings. And unfortunately, it seems to view its interests as exerting or maintaining control over neighboring states. That's why leaders here from Poland, Estonia and other Russian neighbors seemed more skeptical than Western Europeans of the possibility of warming relations.

Russia wants to derail a NATO missile-defense project directed at Iran, not because the deployment would threaten Russia or its nuclear arsenal—it would not—but because the system would be deployed in Poland and the Czech Republic, two former Warsaw Pact nations.

It wants to keep Georgia and Ukraine out of the European Union or NATO, because both countries used to be part of the Soviet Union. It does not want Europe building a natural-gas pipeline toward Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea, because that would threaten Russia's monopoly position, with which it enhances its political influence.

If such goals are at the top of Russia's wish list, then a grand bargain may prove more elusive than many people, on both sides of the Atlantic, hope. Though a serious diversification policy remains a distant goal, this winter's gas cutoff, the second such episode, seems to have convinced a good number of European officials that remaining at Russia's energy mercy is not the wisest idea.

And if some Western Europeans hoped that Obama might be more willing than his predecessor to sacrifice the interests of Russia's small neighbors to the West's larger strategic interests in Iran or elsewhere, Biden seemed to close that door.

"It will remain our view," the vice president said, "that sovereign states have the right to make their own decisions and choose their own alliances."

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America's new rescuer: Japan

By DAVID M. SMICK
Special to The Washington Post

Here's a disillusioning thought: Solving the financial crisis may be beyond the capacity of government finances. The likely $3 trillion price tag, give or take, of both saving the banks and stimulating the economy is causing interest rates to inch up. U.S. Treasury long-term rates have already risen from 2.1 percent just before Christmas to nearly 3 percent.

This is happening because the rest of the world, which is also in trouble, is following in our fiscal footsteps. Financial markets envision a coming global credit Armageddon. And a scenario of rising interest rates, with rates really jumping once our economy starts to recover, could kill any chance that the recovery is sustainable.

The Obama team needs to do some quick, creative, global thinking. To escape a potential credit straitjacket, they should go where the money is. Today, the money is in Japan, still the world's largest source of excess savings.

It's true that we can rely on the hope of financing this new debt through tax increases. But because of the sheer size of the debt we're undertaking—by comparison, our gross domestic product is only $14 trillion—taxes as a percentage of GDP would have to roughly double, jumping from today's 20 percent to potentially more than 40 percent of GDP. And don't forget about the coming entitlement nightmare and the likelihood that more bailouts will be necessary.

Washington can do nothing here. Financial markets will conclude that the Federal Reserve will eventually monetize, or devalue, the debt by letting inflation soar. Such an expectation of future inflation will produce, in the near term, further increases in market interest rates—again, smothering recovery.

Even though the United States needs to become less dependent on foreign capital, for now at least we still need a banker—and one in sync with our long-term economic and security goals. Our choice: China or Japan.

During his confirmation hearings, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner fixated on China. But Beijing is sitting on its own social and political bubble, which is about to burst. When that happens, China will be tempted to draw massive amounts of its global savings back home if only to buy off the angry mobs in the streets. Japan is a more logical focus.

Unlike China, Japan is a mature, predictable, structurally stable economy. Geithner knows its financial system well. Tokyo is sitting on a mountain of savings in the form of official reserves, private savings and public pensions, and it is potentially open to a win-win deal on the issue of currencies and the purchase of our debt.

Consider the situation: Tokyo has lost control over its soaring currency. The yen has risen nearly 30 percent against the dollar in just the past 18 months, despite the dollar strengthening against most other world currencies. This dramatic surge (the result of once-aggressive Japanese buyers of foreign bonds bringing their savings back home as the world slashes interest rates to Japan-like levels) is killing Japan's global competitiveness. Locked in its own currency straitjacket, the export-dependent Japanese economy is in freefall. The collapse of Japanese exports to China hasn't helped matters. To put it simply, Japan is as desperate for currency relief as we are for credit relief.

So here's the deal: Tokyo agrees to ample enough additional purchases of U.S. debt and other financial assets to bring sustained downward pressure on U.S. long-term interest rates. This influx of capital would give the United States some breathing room to recover economically and eventually get our financial house in order. In return, Washington agrees to a weaker yen against the dollar. Achieving such a currency adjustment may seem farfetched, but the yen-dollar exchange rate historically has been heavily influenced by the market's perception of the U.S. and Japanese governments' comfort level for the currency relationship.

A new "G-2" deal would have its complications. For starters, Washington and Tokyo would have to cobble together a joint venture to protect American car companies from currency risk of their own.

A case can be made, however, that a joint international effort is really the only means of achieving advances such as a "next generation" environmentally friendly propulsion system. Japanese strategists would also need to be convinced that America has a long-term plan for financial reform.

It may turn out that even Japan's savings are not enough to finance our ballooning debt. But an attempt at a "G-2" deal is better than financial suffocation. Moreover, if such an alliance is a no-go, the Obama team quickly needs an alternative plan. No matter how much we hate it, America needs a banker. Timothy Geithner and Larry Summers are smart, and smart guys don't allow their boss to dive off the financial high board without knowing the depth of the credit waters below.

English marches toward its millionth word

By BARRY GOTTLIEB
SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

By the end of April 2009, the English language will be 1 million words strong. That is if you believe the Global Language Monitor, an organization that uses people combined with computer algorithms to track trends in languages around the world.

According to the Texas-based organization, English picks up a new word every 98 minutes—about 15 a day—or just enough to make my spell-checker feel really dumb.

The GLM doesn't say anything about words being kicked out, so we can assume that English is the pack rat of languages and only gets bigger.

I'm not sure what the new words popping up every 98 minutes are, but I'm sure they're along the lines of "repurpose," "ginormous," "hella"—and its grade-school equivalent, "hecka"—and "Obamalovefest," which may not make it, depending on whether bankruptcy becomes the leveraged buyout of the decade.

A million words is way more than any dictionary includes. Standard dictionaries define about 200,000 words. The Oxford English Dictionary has about 600,000. That means either the GLM has heard words the Oxford people haven't, or it stopped counting after "obfuscation," or it knows no one is going to go down the list and count them all.

A million seems like a lot of words. But if you figure there are about 1.3 billion people who speak English, that's only one word for every 1,350 speakers. I don't know about you, but I'd hate to find out I was one of those people who didn't have a personal word, though should that happen I'd make one up just so I could feel important. Maybe a word such as "grobwich." Or "pongroid." If I can persuade the GLM to recognize these, then I will have gotten us to Million Word Day a bit sooner.

But do we really need a million words?

The typical American knows about 20,000 words but uses only 7,500 of them in a given day. This means that on many days, we have 12,500 unused words gathering dust in the crannies of our cerebellum. That being the case, what could we possibly do with 980,000 more of them? As it is, I'm afraid that if I stuff one more thing into the right side of my head, my Social Security number's going to fall out my left ear.

The GLM estimates that the millionth word will show up near April 29, but it could be as soon as March 30, which makes it difficult to plan a Million Word Party.

But while we're waiting for another ginormous number of hella repurposed words to join the language, maybe we'll be lucky enough to come across another, uh, classic—like grody, Y2K or macarena. How pongroid!

Gottlieb, the author of If It's Such a Small World Then Why Have I Been Sitting on This Airplane For Twelve Hours? *writes at maddogproductions.com*.

A rush to bitterness

By FRANK HARRIS III
SPECIAL TO THE HARTFORD COURANT

It's been fewer than three weeks since President Obama took the helm of the Good Ship America. This ship, our ship, is an America tossed by the seas of an unstable economy, torpedoed by the decisions of selfish executives, buckled by the winds of an unnecessary war.

The sea is unsettled; the ship is rocking. No more general quarters; it's battle stations. Some fight foreclosures; others cling to jobs; others who have lost their homes and jobs struggle to keep their heads and hopes above water.

Alas, the Good Ship America that Obama inherited from the previous captain and crew came damaged. But it's his ship now. It's our ship now too, though it is said things will get worse before they get better. In his role as captain, his job is to set this ship right and steer us toward blue skies and safe harbor.

Yet from across the deck comes the cry: "I hope he fails!"

It is the voice of Rush Limbaugh, the conservative radio commentator. He said it on his radio show shortly after Obama's inauguration. Limbaugh hopes the captain of the Good Ship America fails.

I look up at the Stars and Stripes on the Good Ship America. I see the first flag beneath it: the First Amendment.

You have a right to your voice and all voices need not agree. But I gotta ask Mr. Limbaugh, `Do you really, truly want the captain to fail?'

You do?

But don't you know that if he fails, that means the Good Ship America goes down with us aboard?

Who is us?

Americans of all races and creeds, ethnicities and genders, religions and persuasions; Americans tall and short, thick and thin, rich and poor, sheltered and homeless, meek and mighty. We are all aboard the Good Ship America, Mr. Limbaugh. We would all go down.

"I hope he fails!"

So you are saying you don't care about us and you are willing to go to the bottom of the sea and drown rather than hope the captain succeeds? Ah, but then you know that if Obama fails and the ship goes down, you won't suffer like others who have lost their jobs and homes and spirit. You will have your own lifeline and private boat. So isn't it a bit selfish to say you hope he fails?

What? You still hope he fails? Because he's a liberal and a Democrat?

Mr. Limbaugh, I suspect it is more than that. I think you are putting race before country. You would rather the whole country go down to the bottom of the sea than have a man like Obama successfully pilot the ship through the straits of the hell that the previous captain and crew put us into. How bitter the bile that your antipathy for the new captain is greater than your love of your Good Ship America. I would not want the captain of the ship failing anymore than I'd want the pilot of an airplane failing, whether I'm on the plane or not.

This race-first mentality is what drove this country for many years. Cast aside this mentality. Let it go.

There is a new captain of the Good Ship America.

"I hope he fails!" is the last-gasp mantra of one who yearns for the America of old. The yearning of a bitter man in defeat who would prefer the salt of the bottom of the sea over the safety, security and well-being of his country and its people.

How bitter the bile; how shameful the shameless.

Frank Harris III is chairman of the journalism department at Southern Connecticut State University.

Letter to the Editor

Repayment

This is in response to the Feb. 9, 2009, article on Rep. Joseph C. Reyes's call to PUC to get compensation packages or repayments for damaged appliances during power outages that took place in March 2008 to around mid-September 2008.

I implore Rep. Reyes to urge our lawmakers not only to look for repayment for damaged appliances and interrupted TV, but also to consider the basic daily necessities that we could not avail of that we so normally take for granted on this planet, such as taking a shower when we need to, brushing our teeth, and preparing meals for our families. The outages spanned over a longer period of time than we have ever had to experience even in the event of a major storm or natural disaster. Even with a two-week outage from a typhoon, the citizens of the CNMI were always granted some kind of relief package. You would think we'd surely need it more with continuous outages over a span of five to six months. Many families resorted to canned food, candles, batteries, generators, and even renting hotel rooms just to be able to take a decent shower and have a full night's rest. Frozen food that had been spoiled had to be thrown out, costing families hundreds of dollars if not more. Students went to school tired, and probably hungry, unable to focus. Everyone at work seemed dazed and discombobulated. Businesses may have lost just as much, if not more.

So, Rep. Reyes, when you and our lawmakers meet to discuss this repayment package for damaged appliances, please consider the other basic necessities that we were deprived of, to include the cost of batteries, ordering potable water from water companies, purchasing or rental and fueling of generators, rental of hotel rooms for taking showers and preparing meals for our families, and whatever distress the power emergency may have caused us. CUC may make any decree they feel necessary to plead with the community to save electricity, and go green, that is important, but it is also important that the disservice that has been brought upon their customers because of lack of planning not go on without any remorse and compensation. What we would appreciate the most is if our lawmakers can put their heads together to assist us in getting a fair compensation package that is worth discussing; that will really pay us all back for the damages and emotional distress brought upon us.

Joylene B. Limes
Kagman III, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 5 to 10 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 5 to 10 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with scattered showers.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼77°	▲85° ▼77°	▲85° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼77°

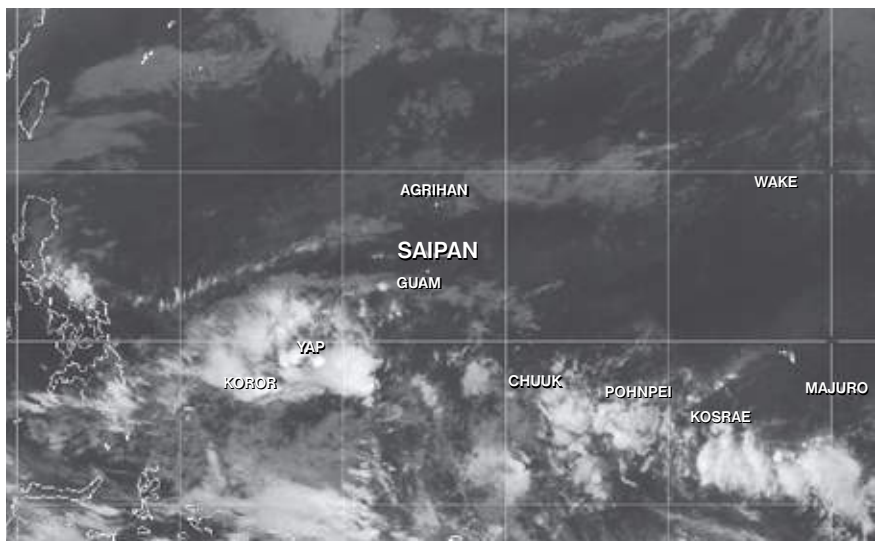
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲82	▼76
Palau	Rain	▲85	▼77
Yap	Rain	▲85	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲89	▼78
Pohnpei	Rain	▲84	▼79
Kosrae	Rain	▲85	▼80
Majuro	Showers	▲85	▼77

Around The Globe

Auckland	Cloudy	▲76	▼69
Beijing	Sunny	▲54	▼30
Hong Kong	Partly Sunny	▲81	▼66
Honolulu	Showers	▲77	▼70
London	Rain	▲39	▼31
Los Angeles	Partly Sunny	▲58	▼44
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲81	▼73
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲65	▼50
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲80	▼69
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲52	▼42
Osaka	Cloudy	▲51	▼39
Paris	Rain	▲44	▼39
Pusan	Sunny	▲57	▼35
Rome	Rain	▲56	▼48
Salem	Showers	▲43	▼34
San Francisco	Partly Sunny	▲54	▼47
Seoul	Partly Sunny	▲48	▼36
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲55	▼41
Washington, DC	Cloudy	▲55	▼45

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, MONDAY, FEB. 9, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25N180 to 20N170E then continues as a shear line to 18N150E to 15N140E to beyond 130E at 12N. Cloudiness and scattered light showers are found along and up to 200 miles north of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough extends from 3N130E to EQ135E. Low-level winds converging east of the trough are generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms south of 2N from 133E to 137E. A surface trough extends northwestward from EQ143E to a weak surface circulation at 5N138E to 11N137E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found near Yap between 7N and 11N from 137E to 141E and south of 1N from 142E to 144E. Convergent low-level winds behind a trade-wind disturbance southwest of Chuuk are producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms between the equator and 10N from 144E to 150E. Scattered trade-wind showers and a few thunderstorms are occurring east of Chuuk between 5N and 8N from 152E to 155E. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms south of Pohnpei, Kosrae and Majuro within 150 miles of a line from 4N157E to 4N170E to 2N176E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
2:06 AM Today	Low Tide:	0.6 Feet
8:51 AM Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet
2:33 PM Today	Low Tide:	0.9 Feet
7:47 PM Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:44 AM	6:19 PM
Wednesday	6:43 AM	6:19 PM
Thursday	6:43 AM	6:20 PM
Friday	6:43 AM	6:20 PM
Saturday	6:42 AM	6:20 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	6:59 PM	6:55 AM
Wednesday	7:56 PM	7:39 AM
Thursday	8:50 PM	8:19 AM
Friday	9:43 PM	8:59 AM
Saturday	10:36 PM	9:38 AM

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- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

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  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

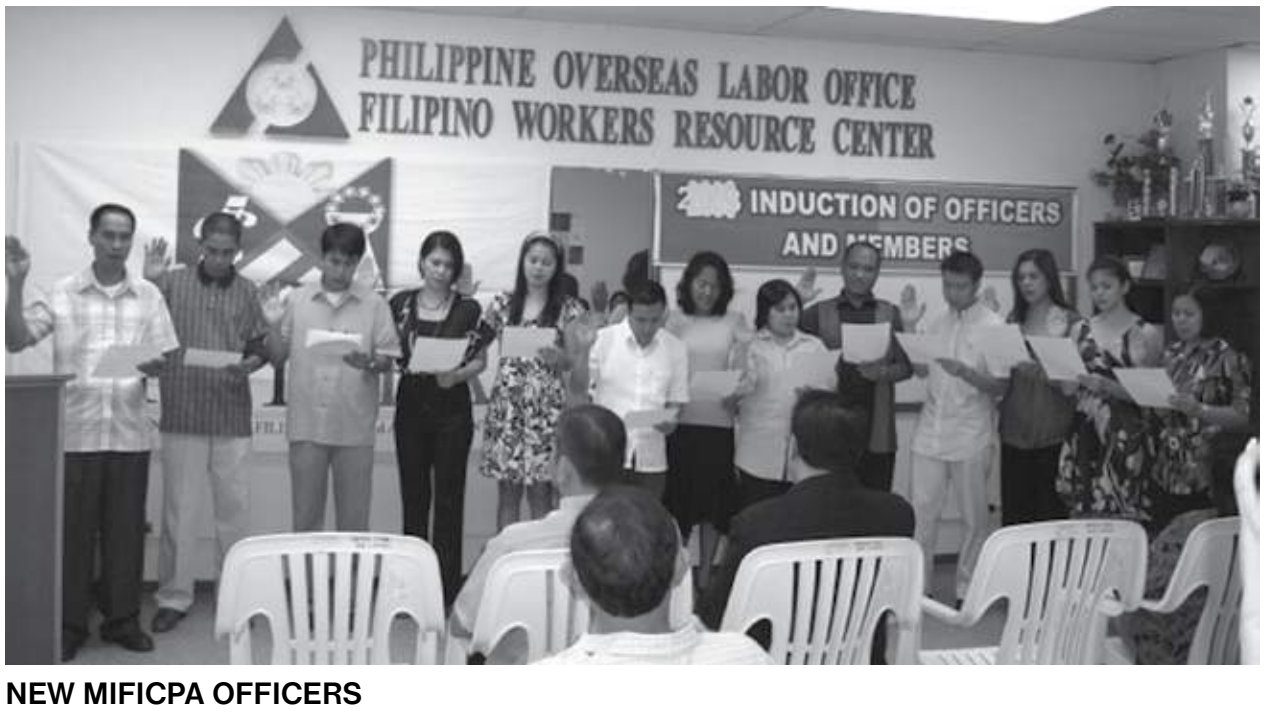
Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Island Snapshots

MIFICPA PRESIDENTS

MIFICPA founder and first president Ignacio Banadera, right, of Saipan Shipping poses with past and the current presidents of the group. From left, Leriza Debrum of IT&E, 2003 president; Gerry De Guzman of Island Apparel, 2006-2007 president; Irene Santiago of Shirley's Coffee Shop, 2008 president; Melvin Malvar of Tropex Garden Co., current president, Wilfredo Ching owner of Perfectly Set, 1998 president; Andrew Tolentino of Pacific Island Club, 2001 president.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



NEW MIFICPA OFFICERS

The new officers of MIFICPA take their oath of office. The Inductees are Melvin Malvar of Tropex Garden Co., president; Rene Cariaso of Century Insurance Co., vice president for external affairs; Robert Reyes of Century Insurance, vice president for internal affairs; Aileen Indino of Grant Thornton LLP, secretary; Donna Paleracio of Joeten Enterprises, assistant secretary; Ronnel Calma of Car Quest, treasurer; Cristy Villaflor of Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan, assistant treasurer; Bebilyn Estrada of Century Insurance, auditor; Nolito Santos of Marpac, business manager; Marlon Estigoy of Hafadai Beach Hotel, public relations officer; and Irene Santiago of Shirley's Coffee Shop, Loise Manese of Joeten Ace Hardware, Aileen Javier of Hardt Eye Clinic, Marie Luisa Taniegra of RNV Construction, and Jhocelyn Doreza of Burger & Comer PC CPA, board members.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NEW CRIME LAB

From left, Frank Tenorio, Crime Lab Officer in Charge (1980-1985); Frank Ishizaki, founder of DPS Lab and chief criminalist (1971-1979); and Rey Hormillosa, chief criminalist (1985-present) pose in front of the present Crime Lab site in Guam. The Friends of the Crime Lab Inc. is now in the process of identifying fundraising targets to raise the $5 million needed to build the capacity of the Crime Lab to include DNA, Toxicology, and other equipment and training.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Belated birthday greetings go out to Roxanne Ben, who is shown here celebrating her 5th birthday at the Garapan Head Start. Belated happy birthday! We love you! From Kuya Royce, Ate Renren, Tatay and Nanay, and Lola.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

STARS AND STRIPES

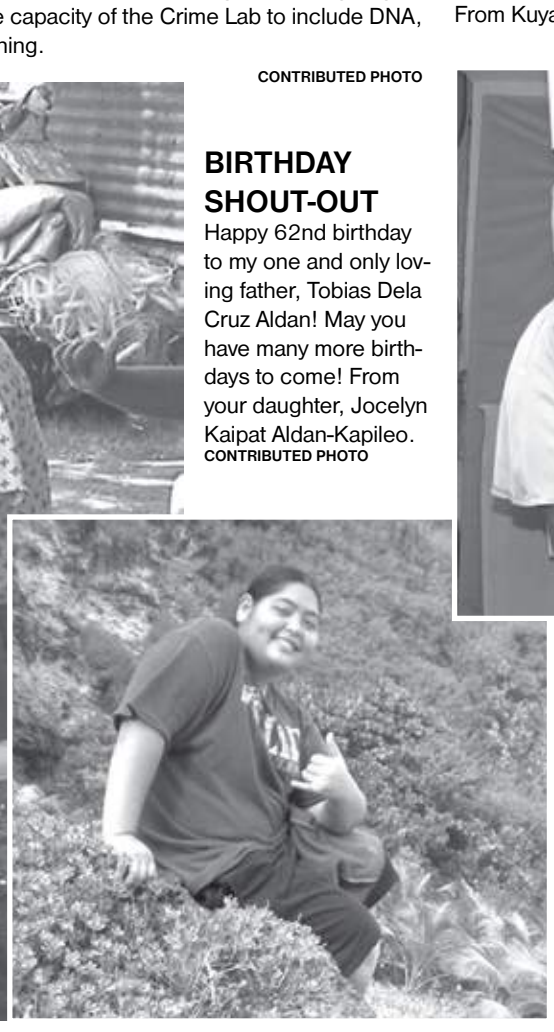
Brothers Lance and Marc enjoy the paintings on their faces done by San Vicente Elementary School's former teacher of the year awardee, Cathy Pagapular, during the school's recent walkathon at the baseball field. The walkathon was a big success as many parents supported the fundraising event.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BIRTHDAY SHOUT-OUT

Happy 62nd birthday to my one and only loving father, Tobias Dela Cruz Aldan! May you have many more birthdays to come! From your daughter, Jocelyn Kaipat Aldan-Kapileo.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



BIRTHDAY BOY

Malou Ernest and her kids, Moira and Goby, join the photo session with birthday celebrant Railee and mom Joy Yumul at the Jolibee Garapan branch on Feb. 5, 2009. Railee celebrated his fourth birthday.

REY BELGADO

Happy birthday greetings go out to Samantha "Sambam" Manibusan Sablan. Happy birthday and God bless! Enjoy your day! Greetings come from your MaLiBu sisters, family and friends, especially your favorite sister, Leng. We love you!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NEWLYWEDS

Newlyweds Kerry and Shiela Marie Borja celebrate a garden wedding on Feb. 7, 2009, at the Borja residence on Tinian. Congratulations and best wishes from the JC Café.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Business

Unemployed use time for health, hobbies and family

FOND DU LAC, Wis. (AP)—Jay Capelle would give anything to get back his factory job of 32 years. At the same time, he's grateful to have extra time on his hands these days to care for his ailing wife, stay in shape and work on a long-planned baseball documentary.

The unemployed are stressed out about unpaid bills, dashed retirement plans and the loss of workplace camaraderie. But many say life minus work also has its bittersweet upsides, including more time with family and friends, learning new skills, focusing on their health and pursuing hobbies.

There is a wide range of opinions, of course, about just how sweet, or bitter, the experience has been.

An idled auto worker in Wisconsin cherishes extra time with his kids, and his guitar. A former communications worker in Virginia finds time for hiking as a distraction from the job search. But two jobless friends in North Carolina who've played plenty of golf together say enough is enough: they're ready again for the joy of earning a paycheck.

All of these people said they would give up their newfound free time in a heartbeat if they could land jobs. And most spend hours each day trying. But as unemployment spells drag on longer than anticipated, they have allowed themselves to enjoy activities not directly related to the job hunt without feeling guilty.

Alex Swain, 36, of Leesburg, Va., said his fruitless search for work has been discouraging. Since losing his job last April at a wireless communications company, Swain has applied for more than 200 jobs, gone on 10 interviews and has not had a single offer.

But rather than sulking in front of the television when he's not searching online job postings, Swain forces himself to keep up with hobbies like playing music, painting and hiking.

"You can't stay in the house all day or you'll lose your mind," he said.

Others are spending time in the classroom.

Andre Lovato, 55, of Waukesha, Wis., who was laid off from his job at a signmaking company in 2006, earned a degree in printing and publishing from a technical college in December. Lovato, who has applied for 35 jobs since then without any luck, devotes his free time to woodcarving, sketching and computer illustrations.

But as his unemployment drags on, he longs for interaction with colleagues and getting praise for a job well-done.

"I miss showing my work and having people say, 'Hey man, you did pretty good stuff,'" he said.

Brad Palzkill, 39, was laid off from the General Motors plant in Janesville, Wis., last June. This means the family can't afford to eat out as often, and the kids' Christmas gifts were less extravagant last year. But he doesn't miss installing hundreds of consoles in trucks every night, which took a toll on his knees and wrists; and it's nice to have more free time to spend with family and strumming his guitar—when he's not looking for work.

AP

Jay Capelle, 60, speaks in his Fond du Lac, Wis. home Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2009. Capelle has been unable to find a job since losing his maintenance mechanic position at Mercury Marine in May 2008.

Mo. patent fight shows perils of 'tech transfer'

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP)—Mere months ago, the University of Missouri routinely touted chemical engineering professor Galen Suppes for his innovative research into renewable energy.

Now the school considers him a renegade scientist trying to keep the university from getting its fair share of profits from his inventions. Missouri is suing the professor in federal court.

Their deteriorating relationship points to the broader pitfalls of "technology transfer," the growing enterprise in which university labs help incubate discoveries that can speed lifesaving drugs and modern conveniences to market.

Those innovations can line the pockets of scientists and their university employers with millions in royalties. A prime example is the University of Florida, where the creation of Gatorade nearly four decades ago launched the sports drink industry while earning the school more than $80 million.

But for every Gatorade success story, missteps or disputes like the one in Missouri are more typical.

Often, universities have inflated hopes about the money they can reap from technology transfer, said Joshua Powers, an Indiana State University professor who studies the subject. Powers has found that the top tier of universities such as Yale, Stanford and California-Berkeley account for 60 percent of all technology-driven profits earned on campuses nationwide. Many other schools lose money vying for their share, because applying for patents and trying to license them for commercial use is complex, costly and time-consuming.

"Universities are under enormous pressure to demonstrate their worth in economic terms," Powers said. "By definition, they are involved at the early stage of the research process. They often don't know when a technology is going to be successful."

Missouri says it is among those schools profiting from technology transfer. In the most recent fiscal year, the campus spent $1.4 million marketing intellectual property while earning $6.2 million in licensing income.

Wall Street anxious for passage of stimulus

NEW YORK (AP)—The coming week on Wall Street will be largely shaped by events in Washington, with investors anticipating the passage of an economic stimulus bill while awaiting more details on how the Obama administration plans to save the nation's ailing financial system.

Many analysts are expecting the government's moves to give the market a boost but warn that the euphoria could be short-lived, in keeping with a recent pattern where the reality of the economy's woes overshadows early optimism over government initiatives.

"You have Wall Street watching Washington and you have Washington watching Wall Street," said Marc Groz, managing member of Topos LLC, a Stamford, Conn.-based asset manager and risk advisory firm. "How it plays out is very unclear."

The Senate is expected to pass an $827 billion stimulus bill on Tuesday. The administration, however, still faces difficulties reconciling the Senate bill with the House's $819 billion version that passed earlier. President Barack Obama is pressing to have the stimulus measure—designed to pull the economy out of the longest recession in decades—on his desk for signing by mid-month.

Meanwhile, investors are also anxiously awaiting a speech by Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner on Tuesday outlining the Obama administration's plan to overhaul the government's $700 billion financial bailout program. Geithner had been scheduled to announce the plan Monday, but Treasury spokesman Isaac Baker said Sunday that the administration wants to spend that day focused on the Senate's effort to pass the stimulus bill.

JPMorgan equity strategist Thomas Lee said this week could be one of the most important of the year, with both the passage of a stimulus and a comprehensive plan for the banks being positive steps for restoring the nation's economy.

"Whatever plan is unveiled, it will establish a framework to rehabilitate the financial system," he wrote in a research note. "The lack of a comprehensive plan has been an obvious source of uncertainty, keeping investors out of equities."

Who gets what: Billions to colleges and students

DURHAM, N.C. (AP)—The stimulus plan emerging in Washington could offer an unprecedented, multibillion-dollar boost in financial help for college students trying to pursue a degree while they ride out the recession.

It could also hand out billions to the states to kick-start idled campus construction projects and help prevent tuition increases at a time when families can least afford them.

But cuts of $40 billion for state and local governments in the Senate version were a big disappointment for college leaders. House-Senate negotiations will determine whether education aid to the states is relatively modest or massive—and how much gets directed to high-need institutions for building projects, versus elite universities that would benefit if the final package spends more of the money on scientific research.

Students are big winners. Both the House and Senate bills call for the largest-ever funding increase for Pell Grants, the government's chief college aid program for low-income students.

It will take much of the proposed $15.6 billion increase in the House version (slightly less in the Senate) just to erase the existing funding shortfall and meet the surging demand as the economy sours and more students enroll.

But the package would also increase next year's maximum award by up to $500, to $5,350, starting July 1. That's the biggest increase in history and would cover three-quarters of the cost of the average public four-year college.

Dubai official says no plans to sell Barneys

DJIBOUTI (AP)—The chairman of the Dubai conglomerate that owns Barneys New York said Saturday the company is not looking for a buyer for the luxury retailer, dispelling recent media reports.

"We have not announced nor seeked anybody regarding Barneys," Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem said in response to a question from The Associated Press.

The Dubai World chairman made the comment during a briefing with reporters after the opening of a port operated by his company's DP World subsidiary in the Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti.

Sulayem oversees many of Dubai's biggest state-owned companies, including real estate developer Nakheel and investment arm Istithmar World, which bought Barneys less than two years ago.

A number of news organizations have reported that Istithmar might be trying to sell the high-end retailer.

The reports come amid concerns by some bankers and analysts about Dubai's ability to repay its debts. Officials in the city-state, which borrowed heavily to fuel a frenzied building and infrastructure boom in recent years, have sought to tamp down those fears and say Dubai has the resources to pay its creditors.

Sulayem joined Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh in opening the DP World-run Doraleh container terminal outside of the capital, Djibouti, on Saturday.

The company and parent Dubai World play an outsize role in the African country, which overlooks many of the world's main shipping lanes from its perch at the mouth of the Red Sea.

In addition to ports, the Dubai conglomerate operates a free trade zone, a fuel depot and the country's only five-star hotel.

More than 1,200 U.S troops are stationed in Djibouti, which hosts the base for an anti-terrorism task force in the Horn of Africa. France also has a base in the country, its former colony.

Nation

Obama faces tough week; stimulus, bailout on tap

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama plunges into a difficult test of his leadership this week, struggling to get a divided Congress to agree on his economic recovery package while pitching a new plan to ease loans to consumers and businesses.

The Senate's $827 billion stimulus legislation seems assured narrow passage by Tuesday. Harder work for Obama and the Democrats comes in the days ahead, when the House and Senate attempt to reconcile differences in their two versions.

Obama and Democratic Party leaders had hoped to have a bill ready for the president's signature by Feb. 16—a goal that appears increasingly unlikely.

At the Treasury Department, Secretary Timothy Geithner delayed the unveiling of a new bailout framework for financial institutions from Monday to Tuesday. Geithner is considering steps to broaden the use of a new lending facility at the Federal Reserve, provide government guarantees to help banks deal with their troubled assets, and continue direct infusion of capital into banks in exchange for securities and tougher accountability rules.

For Obama, the economy has become a two-front engagement, with one effort aimed at creating or saving jobs and the other at unfreezing the credit markets. Amid the urgency created by nearly 600,000 new unemployed workers last month and new bank failures, Obama's economic prescriptions are coming under critical scrutiny by both Congress and the American public.

The House and Senate bills are about $7 billion apart in cost and overlap in numerous ways. But the Senate bill has a greater emphasis on tax cuts, while the House bill devotes more money to states, local governments and schools.

Lawrence Summers, Obama's top economic adviser, signaled the struggle ahead as he made the rounds of Sunday morning talk shows. "There are crucial areas, support for higher education, that are things that are in the House bill that are very, very important to the president," he said on ABC.

Rep. Barney Frank of Massachusetts, the Democratic chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, warned that reductions in state spending in the Senate bill would hurt local communities.

"To get any Republicans at all, you had to adopt a cut that's going to mean policemen and firemen are going to be laid off," he said. "Aid to the states is to prevent this budget crunch from laying off public employees. "

Sen. John Ensign of Nevada, a member of the Senate Republican leadership, dismissed Frank's complaint as "fear-mongering."

The Senate bill is finely tuned. With only two or three Republicans on board, it is guaranteed, at most, 61 votes; the bill needs 60 votes to advance and avoid procedural hurdles. Any change in the balance struck by the Senate bill could doom it.

Obama will take his case to the American people Monday with his first prime-time news conference. He'll also participate in town hall-style meetings in cities suffering particularly hard times—Elkhart, Ind., on Monday and Fort Myers, Fla., on Tuesday.

AP

President Barack Obama boards Marine One on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, Saturday, Feb. 7, 2009.

ACROSS THE NATION

Slain Fla. toddler's grandmother pens eulogy

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—The grandmother of a slain Florida toddler is asking that only those with "the purest of hearts" and "truly honorable intentions" attend a public memorial service for her this week. In a eulogy published in the Orlando Sentinel on Sunday, Cindy Anthony also says granddaughter Caylee "now has her angel wings and will be watching over so many other children." Cindy Anthony says donations have been made on Caylee's behalf to organizations that help children, such as Toys for Tots and the Make-a-Wish Foundation. She says the family will establish a foundation in Caylee's name. Caylee was 2 when she disappeared last summer. Her remains were found Dec. 11. Her mother, Casey Anthony, has been charged with killing her. The memorial service is set for Tuesday.

65,000 gallons of oil sludge spills near Chicago

ROCKDALE, Ill. (AP)—A holding tank at a Caterpillar facility in a Chicago suburb broke Sunday, spilling about 65,000 gallons of oil sludge and contaminating a 3-mile section of the Des Plaines River, officials said. The substance was reported to be hydraulic and cutting oil, said Maggie Carson, a spokeswoman for the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. "It is being contained, and there is no evidence of a fish kill or harm to water fowl," Carson said in an e-mail. Most of the sludge spilled on land, but 6,000 gallons seeped into Des Plaines River water, U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer William Mitchell said. He said the oil waste poses no risk to human health but could be dangerous to animals in the contaminated area. The Coast Guard said barge and boat traffic along the river had been stopped.

States struggle to fund crime compensation

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—On a June night two summers ago, Debra Rabideau-Stevens tried to break up a fight between two women at a northern Wisconsin tavern. The husband of one of the women grabbed her wrist, snapping it in two places. Four operations later, she has racked up more than $31,000 in medical bills. With no insurance and no job, the former cook turned to Wisconsin's crime victim compensation fund. But the cash-strapped program has covered less than half of her expenses, leaving her to fend off as many as eight creditor calls a day. "I respond to them and try to explain to them," said Rabideau-Stevens, 47, of Ashland. "But it just doesn't help. It's a nightmare." Around the country, state programs designed to help crime victims rebuild their lives are running out of money as claims increase, medical expenses rise and lawmakers cope with the recession. Several states' programs face deficits or have cut benefits.

NY river pilot describes 'shocking' thuds of geese

NEW YORK (AP)—The pilot who ditched his jetliner in the Hudson River and saved the lives of everyone on board said he had a "sickening" feeling when a flock of birds disabled both engines with violent thuds, crippling the plane at 3,000 feet over the nation's most populous city.

Capt. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger said in an interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" that the sound of the geese hitting the plane and the smell of burning poultry entering the cabin was "shocking."

"Oh, you could hear them," he said. "Loud thumps. It felt like the airplane being pelted by heavy rain or hail. It sounded like the worst thunderstorm I'd ever heard growing up in Texas."

The interview with Sullenberger and the other four crew members was broadcast Sunday, their first since US Airways Flight 1549 landed in the frigid water Jan. 15.

Sullenberger took control of the plane from his first officer and glided it to safety, but said that in the aftermath of the emergency landing, he lay awake at night second-guessing his performance, even though all 155 people aboard survived.

He said he initially had trouble forgiving himself because he thought he could have done something different in that "critical situation."

"The first few nights were the worst," Sullenberger said. "When the `what ifs' started."

He said he no longer regrets his actions that day, calling his decision to land in the river "the only viable alternative" to attempting a return to LaGuardia Airport or landing at Teterboro Airport in New Jersey.

AP

In this image released by CBS, Capt. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger is shown with Katie Couric at home in his kitchen in Danville, Calif., on Jan. 30, 2009, during his first interview since the U.S. Airways pilot landed his plane on the Hudson River in New York.

Some rescued fishermen return to Lake Erie

PORT CLINTON, Ohio (AP)—Many of the 134 fishermen rescued from Lake Erie ice returned to the miles-long floe Sunday using rented air boats to retrieve left-behind snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles and other equipment. A few ventured onto the risky ice to fish for walleye.

About 300 fishermen were stationed on stable ice not far from where the crack had opened Saturday, stranding the anglers about 1,000 yards from the Ohio shoreline.

"(The ice) is an honest 14 inches," veteran fisherman Pat Chrysler of Put-In-Bay told The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer in a telephone interview Sunday from South Bass Island. "I measured it with a Stanley tape measure, just to be accurate."

A Coast Guard helicopter surveyed how much abandoned equipment remained on the ice, but fishermen were responsible for recovering their own belongings, said Petty Officer William Mitchell, a Coast Guard spokesman. "You'd have to be crazy to do that," he said of those who were fishing Sunday.

Organ recipients meet family of shooting victim

CLIFTON, N.J. (AP)—James O'Hea was told privately his failing heart gave him little more than a month to live. Terence Begley's diabetes meant more years of dialysis and deteriorating kidneys.

That was before a tragic event—the shooting of three people in a church last November—turned life-affirming through the quick response of one victim's family.

O'Hea, Begley and three other people received organs from 25-year-old Dennis John Malloosseril (mahl-LOO'-sir-ihl). He was shot and killed Nov. 23 as he tried to break up an argument between a fellow church member and her estranged husband, according to police and witnesses.

O'Hea, Begley and the other recipients—Malta Hameed, 40, of Clifton; Migdalia Torres, 52, of Cleveland, Ohio, and John Muscarella, 22, of East Newark—attended a memorial service for Malloosseril on Sunday at the St. Thomas Syrian Orthodox Knanaya (kah-nahn-NIGH'-ya) Church, where the shooting happened.

Before the service, the recipients had an emotional meeting with Mallossseril's parents.

"They bent down and listened to my heart," O'Hea said. "I had tears rolling down my cheeks."

Asia

Aussie wildfire toll at 108

HEALESVILLE, Australia (AP)—Entire towns have been razed by wildfires raging through southeastern Australia, burning people in their homes and cars in the deadliest blaze in the country's history. The number of dead Monday stood at 108, a grim toll that rose almost by the hour as officials reached further into the fire zone.

Searing temperatures and wind blasts created a firestorm that swept across a swath of the country's Victoria state, where at least 750 homes were destroyed and all of the victims died.

"Hell in all its fury has visited the good people of Victoria," Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said. "It's an appalling tragedy for the nation."

If any of the deadly fires were deliberately lit, "There are no words to describe it other than mass murder," he said on Nine Network television.

The skies rained ash and trees exploded in the inferno, witnesses said, as temperatures of up 117 F (47 C) combined with blasting winds to create furnace-like conditions.

The town of Marysville and several hamlets in the Kinglake district, both about 50 miles (100 kilometers) north of Melbourne, were utterly devastated.

At Marysville, a winter tourism town that was home to about 800 people, up to 90 percent of buildings were in ruins, witnesses said. Police said two people died there.

"Marysville is no more," Senior Constable Brian Cross told the AP as he manned a checkpoint Sunday on a road leading into the town.

At least 18 of the deaths were from the Kinglake area, where residents said the fire hit with barely any notice.

AP

Buildings and vehicles sit destroyed at Kinglake northeast of Melbourne, Australia, Sunday, Feb. 8, 2009.

Video appears to show hostage killing in Pakistan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN, Pakistan (AP)—A graphic video delivered to The Associated Press on Sunday appeared to show the execution of a Polish engineer by Pakistani militants who had held him captive for more than four months.

Pakistan has seen a rash of kidnappings and attacks on foreigners in recent months, mostly blamed on al-Qaida and Taliban militants trying to destabilize the secular government and punish it for supporting the U.S.-led war in neighboring Afghanistan.

An American U.N. worker was abducted last week in the border town of Quetta in southwestern Pakistan. Police said Sunday they were investigating a purported separatist group's claim of responsibility.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Armed RP civilians help troops encircle kidnappers holding 3 Red Cross workers

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine police, military and 600 armed civilians have set up a loose cordon around the southern jungles where al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf militants are holding three kidnapped Red Cross workers, police said Sunday. Meanwhile, a kidnapped government health worker escaped from his Abu Sayyaf captors late Saturday on Basilan Island, near Jolo. A local Red Cross official expressed alarm that the new action might endanger the three kidnapped workers, but police said it was necessary to block possible routes the militants could use to move their hostages elsewhere. The International Committee of the Red Cross workers—Andreas Notter of Switzerland, Italian Eugenio Vagni and Mary Jean Lacaba of the Philippines—were seized by gunmen Jan. 15 after they inspected a water project on Sulu province's Jolo island, a predominantly Muslim region.

Ferries collide in Bangladesh, 10 die

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—A ferry boat sank Sunday after colliding with a larger ferry on a river in eastern Bangladesh, killing 10 women and children, police said. Most of the 50 passengers aboard the smaller ferry were able to swim to shore after the accident in Brahmanbaria district's Titas River, local police Chief Lehajuddin said. Three people were rescued from the river and were being treated at a local hospital but 10 others—all women and children—died, he said. Lehajuddin, who uses only one name, said the cause of the accident was still being investigated. He said the larger ferry, which was not damaged, fled after the collision. Rescuers recovered the sunken ferry and ended their search later Sunday because no more bodies were believed to be in the river, Lehajuddin said.

Somali pirates release Chinese fishing boat, crew

TOKYO (AP)—Somali pirates released a Chinese fishing vessel and its multinational crew Sunday from nearly three months of captivity, as Japan announced plans to dispatch two destroyers to the African coast to protect its commercial vessels from piracy, reports said. Chinese naval ships were escorting the fishing boat, the Tianyu No. 8, to safe waters after its release, China's official Xinhua News Agency reported. Its 24-member crew—15 mainland Chinese, one Taiwanese, one Japanese, three Filipinos and four Vietnamese—were safe but would receive medical examinations, it said. China's government expressed appreciation for the crew's release, it said, without giving further details. The boat was hijacked Nov. 13 while fishing off the coast of Kenya and ordered by pirates to sail north to the Somali port of Kismanyu, Xinhua reported earlier.

World

Iraqi shoe thrower due in court

BAGHDAD (AP)—The Iraqi journalist who threw his shoes at ex-President George W. Bush faces trial next week for allegedly assaulting a foreign leader after an appellate court refused to reduce the charge, a judicial official said Sunday.

Muntadhar al-Zeidi, 30, who won folk hero status throughout the Arab world for his protest, has been in custody since the Dec. 14 outburst at Bush's joint news conference with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

He had been due to stand trial in December but his defense team won a delay as it sought to reduce the charges to simply insulting Bush.

However, court spokesman Abdul-Sattar Bayrkdar said an appellate court rejected the request and ordered the journalist to face trial on Feb. 19 on the original charge. He did not say when the appeals court issued its decision.

Bayrkdar refused to speculate what sentence al-Zeidi might receive if convicted, saying it would be up to the court. The defense has said the assault charge carries a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison.

The bizarre act of defiance transformed an obscure reporter from a minor TV station into a national hero to many Iraqis fed up with the nearly six-year U.S. presence here.

The case also drew worldwide attention and became a rallying cry throughout the Muslim world for critics who resent the U.S. invasion and occupation.

2 Gaza rockets hit Israel

JERUSALEM (AP)—Two rockets fired by Palestinian militants struck southern Israel on Sunday, Israel's military said, violating an informal truce even as Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers appeared to hurry closer to a long-term cease-fire deal two days before Israeli elections.

The Gaza Strip's strongman was in Syria, consulting with his Hamas bosses about the truce talks, while Israel's defense minister warned Israelis they would have to pay a painful price as part of any deal. The flurry of activity came just two days before Israelis elect a new government expected to take a harder line in talks with the Palestinians.

The Hamas representative in Lebanon, Osama Hamadan, said negotiations would continue in Cairo on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"I believe it is more logical to discuss the issue of truce with a new (Israeli) government instead of one which is leaving in hours," he said in an interview on the Lebanese TV station ANB, though a new Israeli government would not take office until several weeks after the election.

Israel unilaterally ended a blistering, three-week offensive in Gaza, meant to halt years of rocket fire on southern Israeli communities, last month. Some 1,300 Palestinians were killed, according to Gaza health officials, and the government said 13 Israelis also died. Vast areas of Gaza were destroyed or heavily damaged. Hamas announced its own cease-fire the same day.

While Egypt has been trying to broker a long-term cease-fire, sporadic violence has persisted. In separate attacks, Palestinian rockets exploded in the Nir Am communal farm and the southern city of Ashkelon. No injuries were reported, though cars and buildings were damaged, authorities said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for either attack.

With Israeli elections approaching Tuesday, both sides appeared to be racing to reach some sort of arrangement. Polls show that Israel's next government would be much more hawkish than the current coalition, adding urgency to seal a deal. Israel wants militants to halt their attacks, end arms smuggling into Gaza and release an Israeli soldier Hamas has held captive for more than 2 1/2 years.

Official: Yemen releases 170 al-Qaida suspects

SAN'A, Yemen (AP)—Yemen released 170 men it had arrested on suspicion of having ties to al-Qaida, security officials said Sunday, two weeks after the terror group announced that Yemen had become the base of its activities for the whole Arabian peninsula.

The announcement also comes as government forces say they are poised to sweep through the northern city of Marib to combat an entrenched al-Qaida presence that includes both Yemenis and Saudis.

The officials who announced the release spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not allowed to speak to the press.

The men were freed Friday and Saturday after signing pledges not to engage in terrorism—a strategy the Yemeni government has often used with those suspected of fighting in militant causes abroad. Local tribal leaders are also expected to guarantee the good behavior of the released.

The practice stems in part from the powerful role played by the tribes across the rugged Yemeni countryside as well as the comparative weakness of the central government.

In the past, such releases have raised concern in the United States and increased its reluctance to release Yemeni detainees from the Guantanamo Bay detention facility.

WORLD BRIEFS

4 survivors, 24 dead after Brazil plane crash

SAO PAULO (AP)—Four people at the rear of a plane that crashed in a muddy Amazon river managed to open an emergency door and swim to safety as the aircraft sank, dragging 24 others to their death, officials said Sunday. Most victims were members of a single family that had chartered the plane to travel to a birthday party. Seven children died. "It was all very fast. The plane sank very fast," 21-year-old survivor Brenda Moraes told Brazil's GloboNews TV. "We only had a chance because we were sitting in the last rows and could open the emergency door." Divers on Sunday recovered two dozen bodies from the twin turboprop plane that plunged into the Manacapuru river in a heavy rainstorm the day before, ending rescue operations after all passengers and crew were accounted for, said firefighter Maj. Jair Ruas Braga.

US rancher at center stage in Bolivia land dispute

The man at the center of Bolivia's land wars is an improbable figure: a tall, folksy Montanan whose vast holdings have been ordered confiscated on the grounds he treated workers as virtual slaves. Ronald Larsen, 64, calls the claims unfounded and vows not to give up without a fight. For four decades, he says, he has fed and clothed workers who would otherwise live in squalor—even educating their children. "They've singled me out as an American," Larsen told The Associated Press on Saturday. "We're not just going to walk away like a bunch of sheep." Yet Larsen faces tough odds in fighting to keep his ranch, the last parcel of which he said he bought in 1973, four years after arriving. He is a white "patron"—a word meaning boss, landlord and master—in a racially divided nation run since January 2006 by an Aymara Indian who grew up dirt poor. ***(AP)***

Overdrive

2009 SUBARU IMPREZA WRX

A driver's car on an everyman's budget

BY WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

CORNWALL, N.Y.—Getting it right in the car business is no easy thing. Cars are emotional. Emotions vary with externalities. And externalities—fuel pricing and availability, driving climate, credit conditions and government regulations—are wildly variable.

Making the right car for the right customer at the right price—the price at which that customer will buy and feel good about buying—is, thus, something of a magic trick. In the case of its 2009 Impreza WRX sedan with navigation, Subaru is to be congratulated for pulling one off.

The Impreza, on sale since the early 1990s, has always been an ugly duckling. But its appearance was a quirk that sold, especially when Subaru hopped it up with WRX (World Rally Championship) performance in its later years.

Early Impreza WRX cars lacked aids and creature comforts such as onboard navigation and premium sound systems. But they were wonderfully fast and nimble—probably the best performance cars you could get for the money.

And because they were reasonably fuel-efficient, the early Impreza WRX models were perfect for buyers who valued speed and handling, but not at the social price of being condemned for owning and driving a gas-guzzler.

Still, Subaru thought it could do more to improve the Impreza WRX's appeal. So, last year, the company brought out a softer version, more mainstream in external design and, unfortunately, more mainstream in performance.

Reshaping the Impreza WRX's body proved controversial enough. Hard-core fans, who follow World Rally Championship races and who sometimes participate in them, hated the change. People who wanted an Impreza WRX badge, and nothing else, loved the new look.

But changing the car from a hot, hard runner into something more akin to the performance a Toyota Corolla economy trotter turned off both driving enthusiasts and image wimps.

THE WASHINGTON POST

The external appearance of the 2009 Subaru Impreza WRX is quirky with attitude: ugly for people who regard mainstream family sedan styling as the epitome of automotive design, but edgy enough to attract those who value funk. Viewed from the front, the triple-lipped look is delightfully menacing.

But it looks like Subaru got it exactly right for 2009. External appearance is quirky with attitude—ugly for people who regard mainstream family sedan styling as the epitome of automotive design, but edgy enough to attract those who value funk. The front end looks like a triple-lipped bug with an air-intake slit below the front bumper, another above the bumper and a functional air scoop atop the hood.

The side panel lines just beneath the windows—"hip lines" in auto industry parlance—slant upward. Viewed from the front in conjunction with the triple-lipped face, the look is delightfully menacing, sort of like the Impreza WRX is smiling in preparation for consuming something lower in the food chain.

The cabin has been gentrified. The new Impreza WRX looks and feels more like a car than a go-cart. Onboard navigation is now available; and there's even seat heat.

But all of that would have been for naught had Subaru not reinstalled the Impreza WRX's performance DNA, its original hot-rod genome. Equipped with a flat four-cylinder, 2.5-liter, turbocharged, 265-horsepower engine and a suspension to handle it all, this baby can run!

The new Impreza WRX gets nearly 25 miles per gallon on the highway and about 18 miles per gallon in the city. That's nothing to cheer about, especially not in a car that requires premium unleaded fuel. But at today's low pump prices, it won't drive you into bankruptcy. But it will drive you.

The 310-mile run here from my house in Virginia was a total joy, even with the complication of intermittent snow and ice on mountain roads. The all-wheel-drive system in the Impreza WRX handled the mess with ease. Straightaway runs on dry roads were nothing short of exhilarating.

An Impreza WRX with decent looks, a comfortable interior and genuine Impreza WRX performance, available at a base price below $25,000—yeah, Subaru has a winner here.

NUTS & BOLTS

BY WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

COMPLAINT

Better fuel economy is needed in the Impreza WRX, a small car with a turbocharged engine and a thirst for premium fuel. Subaru should consider installing a more fuel-efficient six-speed manual gearbox to this one in place of the less-efficient, standard five-speed manual transmission now offered.

RIDE, ACCELERATION AND HANDLING

This is a driver's car. The ride is deliberately tight and hard, all to give driving enthusiasts the best feel behind the wheel. Acceleration and handling are excellent.

HEAD-TURNING QUOTIENT

It's ugly to many, beautiful to some. Not designed to please everybody.

BODY STYLE/LAYOUT

It's a performance car in an economy sedan/hatchback's body. The engine is up front. It's all-wheel-drive.

ENGINE/ TRANSMISSION

It's equipped with a flat (boxer type) four-cylinder, 16-valve, turbocharged engine that develops 265 horsepower at 6,000 revolutions per minute and 244 foot-pounds of torque at 4,000 revolutions per minute. The engine is mated to a five-speed manual transmission.

CAPACITIES

There are seats for five people. Luggage capacity is 11.3 cubic feet. The fuel tank holds 16.9 gallons of required premium unleaded gasoline.

MILEAGE

About 18 miles per gallon in the city and 25 miles per gallon on the highway.

SAFETY

Standard equipment includes ventilated disc brakes up front and solid discs in the rear, all with antilock protection; emergency braking assistance; electronic stability and traction control; and side and head air bags.

PRICE

The base price on the 2009 Subaru WRX sedan is $24,995. Dealer's invoice price on that model is $23,617. Price as tested is $28,903, including $3,243 in options (special exhaust package and sports trim, premium sound system with navigation, fog lamps) and a $665 destination charge. Dealer's price as tested is $26,527. Prices are sourced from Subaru; Edmunds.com; and Cars.com, an affiliate of The Washington Post.

PURSE-STRINGS NOTE

The perfect car for driving enthusiasts on a budget—more bang for the buck than almost anything on the market. It's a buy.

Ford's Transit Connect aims to fill business niche

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP)—Taking a page from its European division, Ford Motor Co. is bringing its small commercial van, Transit Connect, to the U.S. market.

The boxy cargo vans, will be the first of Ford's European vehicles to cross the Atlantic, available in showrooms this summer, and Ford will show the car this week at the 2009 Chicago Auto Show.

The vans are aimed at small-business owners looking for a vehicle they can customize and maneuver easily through congested city streets. Ford said it is looking to fill a void that market.

"We believe no one is doing this. This is really a whitespace opportunity for us," said Rob Stevens, chief engineer for commercial vehicles at Ford, during a preview of the vehicle last week. "We saw people trying to use small cars and minivans to deliver things."

AP

In this Feb. 5, 2008 file photo provided by the Ford Motor Co., a Ford Transit Connect vehicle is shown.

The cargo capacity is 143 cubic feet, which can handle loads up to 6.5 feet long and 4.7 feet wide. Ford tried to make the cargo space more accessible with sliding doors on both sides.

A catering company, for example, could retrofit the Transit Connect to contain shelving for trays and cakes. A cleaning company could outfit the vehicle to hold vacuum cleaners. Pricing starts at $21,000.

A similar vehicle has been available in Europe since 2003, with Ford selling about 110,000 of them in 2007, Stevens said. The Transit Connect is manufactured in Turkey.

Ford is bringing several other of its European vehicles to the U.S., including the Ford Fiesta, a subcompact and the European version of the Focus.

The Transit Connect is estimated to get about 19 miles per gallon in the city and 24 on highways. Ford is planning to bring a battery-electric version of the Transit Connect in 2010.

Life & Style

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Century Insurance Co. employees.

JP remembered in Saturday walkathon

Nearly 600 individuals walked all the way from Garapan to Susupe last Feb. 7, to honor the memory of former Tan Holdings Corp. executive JP Pangelinan and to help raise funds for the Marianas Cancer Society.

A total of 599 walkers got up at the crack of dawn Saturday to make the trek, dubbed "A Walk to Remember," starting from the newly renamed JP Center (formerly the CIC Centre) in Garapan, all the way to the spruced up Susupe Beach Park. There were 264 Tan Holdings employees who participated, while 335 were non-employees.

Participants began the walk as early as 6am, with most arriving at the Susupe Beach Park a little over an hour later. Upon arriving, the walkers were offered sandwiches and fruits and treated to an outdoor performance by Floyd Lim of the Big Beats and Joel Tagalicud of the Fat Joy Slim Band.

Organizers of the walkathon said it will become an annual event and will be held around the same week as the death anniversary of JP Pangelinan. This year is considered significant because it is the first death anniversary of the former *Saipan Tribune* publisher, who died Feb. 5 last year.

Organizers acknowledged the help of the Department of Public Safety, whose officers ensured the safety of the walkers; the Big Boyz Marine, which lent their service vehicle for the return trip of the walkers; and to all the participants. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Family members of the late *Saipan Tribune* publisher JP Pangelinan have their picture taken during the walk.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Tan Holdings executive vice president Eli Arago, center, poses with friends after the walkathon to the Susupe Beach Park.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

RMS and CTSI employees.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Members of the Northern Marianas Badminton Federation.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Health Secretary Kevin Villagomez, Saipan Grand Hotel GM Ed Cho, and Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan exchange pleasantries after the walk at the Susupe Beach Park.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Employees of Shirley's Coffee Shop.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Participants pose for the *Saipan Tribune* after the walk.

Plant, Krauss win 5 Grammys; Brown booked

By NEKESA MUMBI MOODY
AP MUSIC WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Robert Plant and Alison Krauss' unorthodox partnership yielded rich rewards on Grammy night, as the pair nabbed five awards for their haunting "Raising Sand," including record and album of the year honors.

But their sweep was overshadowed before the show even began when police announced that Chris Brown, himself a double nominee and scheduled performer, was being investigated for allegedly assaulting an unidentified woman the night before. Brown turned himself in to authorities and was briefly held before posting $50,000 bail Sunday night, jail records showed.

Brown and longtime girlfriend Rihanna, also nominated, were both slated to perform in different slots of the show, but separately dropped out at the last minute. The victim of Brown's alleged assault wasn't identified, and it wasn't immediately clear whether Rihanna's absence was related to Brown's.

Police booked the 19-year-old R&B singer and dancer on suspicion of making a criminal threat, a felony. Police did not explain how their initial report of an injury assault related to the charge, but it will ultimately be up to the district attorney's office to decide what charges, if any, should be brought against Brown.

Back at the Staples Center, Lil Wayne entered the evening with the most nominations with eight, and went home with four, including rap album of the year.

The pairing of the former Led Zeppelin rocker and Krauss, a bluegrass queen, may have seemed downright weird on paper, but the T Bone Burnett-produced album was universally acclaimed and highlighted Krauss' unique mastery of different musical styles. Subdued but emotionally stirring, "Raising Sand" was an artistic triumph for both artists, and perhaps demonstrated why Krauss is the most decorated female artist in Grammy history with 26.

"We ostensibly come from such different places on the musical map. There are radical differences in the ways we've gone about enjoying our lives as musicians," Plant said backstage after the show. "Alison has shown me so much of the America I've never been exposed to. There's so many songs in the air. America needs to know what it's songs are all about."

Plant and Krauss had already won a Grammy last year for "Gone Gone Gone (Done Moved On)" from "Raising Sand," bringing the record's haul to six. The single was released in time for Grammy contention that year, while the CD was not.

Jennifer Hudson provided the night's most emotional moments onstage. The Oscar winner took her first Grammy award—for best R&B album—for her self-titled debut.

Hudson, 27, made no direct reference to the October killings of her mother, brother and nephew that kept her in seclusion until just this month. But while fighting back tears, she made it clear that her family was foremost on her mind.

"I first would like to thank God who has brought me through. I would like to thank my family in heaven and those who are with me today.

Hudson later performed "You Pulled Me Through," a dramatic song about overcoming deep despair, with the lyrics: "When I was drowning, when I was so confused, you, you pulled me through." As she sang the last note, she looked directly into the camera and dissolved into tears once again.

AP
Robert Plant, left, and Alison Krauss hold their album of the year and best pop collaboration with vocals awards backstage at the 51st Annual Grammy Awards on Sunday, Feb. 8, 2009, in Los Angeles.

The Grammy telecast was filled with eye-popping and eyebrow-raising performances, from Radiohead's collaboration with a college marching band to a televised black-and-white throwback performance from Jay-Z, T.I., Lil Wayne, Kanye West and a (very) pregnant M.I.A. on "Swagga Like Us."

But not even these could patch up the gaping hole in the telecast caused by the absences of Brown and Rihanna. She was supposed to sing "Live Your Life/Disturbia" as the second performance of the night, he was later to sing "Forever."

And each was nominated in the pop collaboration with vocals category, Brown for "No Air" with "American Idol" champion Jordin Sparks; and Rihanna for "If I Never See Your Face Again" with Maroon 5. Brown was also nominated for male R&B vocal performance for "Take You Down."

Neither won a Grammy on Sunday, and the Recording Academy found able replacements for their performance slots in Justin Timberlake, Al Green, Boyz II Men and Keith Urban as they all sang Green's classic hit, "Let's Stay Together." No mention was made on the broadcast about the switch.

At about 3:30 Pacific time, just as the crowd was filing into the Staples Center, Los Angeles police released a report saying Brown was under investigation for an incident the night before. The report said he and a woman were driving in the ritzy neighborhood of Hancock Park when they began to argue around 12:30 a.m. Sunday. Brown stopped the car and both got out, whereupon the argument escalated, the report said. The woman, who had visible injuries when police arrived, identified Brown as her attacker, but he had left the scene, the report said.

Police said Brown walked into a station around 7 p.m. and was interviewed by detectives, and was released after posting bail before 9 p.m. A black SUV was later seen leaving the jail facility, but it wasn't immediately clear whether Brown was inside.

Around the same time, Lil Wayne won the first Grammys of his career for "Tha Carter III," which took the 26-year-old rap veteran to from rap to pop MVP. It wasn't entirely his fault for not sweeping all eight of his nominations: he was competing against himself in two categories in which he won.

Besides rap album, he won best rap solo performance for "A Milli," rap song for "Lollipop" and rap/sung collaboration for "Swagga Like Us."

Coldplay won three, including song of the year for "Viva La Vida."

"We've never had so many Grammys in our life," said lead singer Chris Martin, perhaps so excited he got confused (they had already won four over the years). "We feel so grateful to be here. I'm going to tear up."

Scenes from Grammy weekend

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Death Cab for Cutie got playfully political on the red carpet at Sunday's 51st annual Grammy Awards, making a pitch to stamp out "autotune abuse in music."

"Autotuning is a digital manipulation, a correction of a singer's voice that is affecting literally thousands of singers today and thousands of records that are coming out," said the group's frontman, Ben Gibbard. "So we just want to raise awareness while we're here and try to bring back the blue note. ... The note that's not so perfectly in pitch and just gives the recording some soul and some kind of real character.

"It's how people really sing."

As he spoke, Gibbard was joined by his three bandmates, each one wearing a blue ribbon pinned to his jacket in what the group said was an effort "to raise awareness of autotune abuse in music."

Death Cab for Cutie was nominated for best alternative music album.

■■■

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Who needs reporters?

Sheryl Crow and Taylor Swift interviewed each other on the rep carpet.

"So you're performing? With Miley (Cyrus)?" Crow asked Swift after the two exchanged hugs.

"Yeah, with Miley," Swift said." It's a song off my album called 'Fifteen' that hasn't even been released yet, so I'm really excited."

Next topic: Dresses and diamonds.

"We own our own diamonds here. These are ours," Crow joked as she showed off a massive gilded bracelet she said "could put my child through college."

"Really? I was going to say mine are completely not mine," Swift said.

Actually, both women discovered they were wearing borrowed bling from Lorraine Schwartz.

"We're going to steal them," Crow said. "She's awesome."

■■■

LOS ANGELES (AP)—George Carlin got the last laugh, winning a posthumous Grammy for his final album "It's Bad for Ya."

It was released in July, a month after the comedian died of a heart attack at 71.

Kelly Carlin-McCall accepted her father's fifth career Grammy, this time in the comedy album category. He has also won in the spoken comedy category.

"It's like the cherry on the top of a really, big beautiful cake," she said backstage. "I'm just so happy people are honoring my father, yet he's not here and I'd rather have him."

Onstage, Carlin-McCall promised she would treat the Grammy better than her father did with his first in 1972 for the album "FM and AM."

She explained that he took the statuette apart at a time in his life "when a lot of chemicals were being used by a lot of human beings. It was in pieces and someone from the (Recording) Academy found out and sent him a new one."

■■■

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—Usher was supposed to be one of the performers at music mogul Clive Davis' star-studded bash, but he had to back out for what Davis called a serious illness in his family.

Davis made the announcement moments before Usher was slated to perform in the show. A representative for the singer declined further comment.

But the show did go on in the superstar's absence. With such a plethora of stars in the house, Davis didn't have to go far to look for a replacement in Josh Groban, who took to the piano and sang "Bridge Over Troubled Water."

"This is my first time playing this song," Groban said. Judging from the audience's ovation, it may not be his last.

But Kanye West thought that Groban should have played another tune altogether.

"I think it would have been really cool if he sang 'Love in This Club,'" the rapper joked on stage, referring to Usher's sexy smash hit.

■■■

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—Taylor Swift boogied as Whitney Houston sang her classic hit, "I'm Every Woman"; Diddy had a photo opp with the Jonas Brothers and Barry Manilow; Katy Perry chatted up the brotherly trio and Rihanna; and good friends Jennifer Hudson and Fantasia partied in the early morning hours with Faith Evans.

There were plenty of A-list moments Saturday night at Davis' pre-Grammy bash, held at the Beverly Hilton. Davis' annual event typically draws a who's-who of entertainment, and Saturday was no different. Prince, Sir Paul McCartney, Sly Stone, Motown founder Berry Gordy, Chris Brown, Diddy and others mingled over the nearly six-hour long event.

Bill Maher provided plenty of off-color laughs during his stint on stage, poking fun at the mother of the octuplets, and the Michael Phelps pot controversy.

"Obviously the message is you can smoke weed and still be at the top of your game," he declared.

There were plenty of interesting sightings. Paul McCartney chatted up director Penny Marshall, while Jamie Foxx and the Black Eyed Peas' Taboo whipped out their cameras when Houston gave her comeback performance. A giddy Hudson, Fantasia and Evans danced and sang along in the audience as Houston was on stage, to Houston's delight: At one point, she looked at Hudson and said, "I'm so proud of you!"

Davis has held his annual pre-Grammy bash for years, but this year, the Recording Academy took over the event and honored Davis as one of their industry icons.

■■■

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Some celebrities used their downtime from Grammy rehearsals to visit the posh gift suite set up for their enjoyment.

Grammy nominee Katy Perry walked around tried on pricey sunglasses and picked up some jewelry, asking her entourage for advice on what earrings to pick out.

"The long or the short?" she asked, as she held up a sparkly pair on Friday.

Song of the year nominee Jason Mraz also came through, though he looked a little befuddled when a representative from a flat iron company tried to lure him to pick up one of their products. He ended up getting one, but a representative said he was picking up gifts for his mother.

Others who came through included Rihanna, Chris Brown, Kid Rock, according to representatives for Distinctive Assets, which put on the suite at the Staples Center, where the Grammys are being held Sunday.

It wasn't the only place where stars could get gifted. At the Grammy Style Studio, stars could not only get facials, make up treatments, sneakers and wine from Barry Manilow's winery, they could get designer dresses to wear to Grammy week events—on loan.

Whitney Houston makes triumphant comeback at party

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—A stunning-looking and strong-sounding Whitney Houston made a triumphant return to the stage at a pre-Grammy party honoring her mentor, music mogul Clive Davis.

"I've got it, I've got it!" Houston, looking glamorous in a skintight leopard dress, sang early Sunday morning as she belted a line from one of her classic hits, "I'm Every Woman." But more than a lyric, it summarized to the crowd of A-list superstars and top industry execs that the superstar—whose drug use and erratic behavior had caused a shocking fall from grace just a few years ago—was back in top form.

"We all crossed our fingers that her beautiful story would end (happily)," said Jamie Foxx, who stood at the front of the stage and took video of Houston like he was just another fan in the crowd. "This is a new beginning."

Houston's mini-concert put an exclamation point on a night that included a rousing performance by Kelly Clarkson, an unlikely but magical duet between Jennifer Hudson and Barry Manilow and a rambling monologue by Kanye West.

"I have to bow in the presence of greats right now," West said as he looked out into the crowd, which at one point included Sir Paul McCartney, Prince, Diddy, Rihanna, the Jonas Brothers, Taylor Swift, Quincy Jones, and other luminaries. "I'm just humbled by your greatness, and also Clive," West told the audience.

Davis, the music mogul who founded labels, signed greats ranging from Houston to Bruce Springsteen to Janis Joplin, and resuscitated the careers of veterans like Rod Stewart and Carlos Santana, was honored by the Recording Academy as an industry icon on Saturday, hours before Sunday's Grammys. For nearly three decades, Davis' pre-Grammy party and concert had become one of the industry's most coveted invites; this year, the Recording Academy took the event over and honored Davis instead.

But while Davis got an award, he still held court like it was his own party, acting as the evening's host as he introduced performers like Stewart, the Kings of Leon and Leona Lewis.

Diddy got the often staid crowd on their feet with a moving rendition of his tribute to the slain Notorious B.I.G., "I'll Be Missing You," with Biggie's widow, singer Faith Evans, and a gospel choir.

Clarkson got one of the evening's biggest ovations with her performance of her new single, "My Life Would Suck Without You" and the Joplin gem "Piece of My Heart."

But Hudson was perhaps the night's biggest star—until Houston hit the stage. Starting with the Super Bowl last Sunday, Hudson has been raising her profile after spending months in seclusion following the slayings of her mother, brother and nephew last October.

A smiling Hudson performed her hit "Spotlight," which earned her one of her four Grammy nominations, and got a standing ovation from the crowd. But she raised the bar with a pairing with Barry Manilow, injecting one of his signature songs, "Weekend in New England," with a lacking ingredient—soul.

AP

Singer Whitney Houston performs at the Clive Davis pre-Grammy party in Beverly Hills, Calif. on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2009.

Afterward, the Oscar-winner joined the audience (and friend Fantasia), stood in the front and danced and sang as Houston performed. Houston started off with "I Will Always Love You," but didn't hit the high, sustaining notes that made the song such a dramatic, stirring hit. Instead, she kept her voice at medium power, deciding to croon rather than soar.

But as she got into hits like "It's Not Right, But It's O.K.," her voice appeared to get stronger—and louder, and while she never replicated the vocal gymnastics of some of her past work, delivered a mesmerizing performance nonetheless.

The 45-year-old, one of the best-selling artists of all time and among the greatest singers, hasn't made an album since 2002. Then she was sinking due to drug use and a tumultuous personal life—a far cry from the princess image she cultivated since her debut in the 1980s.

But the singer is expected to release an album sometime this year, and unlike other reported returns, this comeback seems to be the real deal.

"She was on it, she was happy—she's back," said Foxx. "Everybody else watch out."

The Grammys air on Sunday on CBS.

Grammy Awards' best and worst moments

NEW YORK (AP)—Here's a look at some of the highlights and lowlights at this year's Grammy Awards telecast:

■ ■ ■

WAY TO GO, J-HUD: Jennifer Hudson has a Grammy to go with that Oscar. A week after her return to the national stage at the Super Bowl, the actress-singer picked up the first award of the telecast, Best R&B Album for her namesake solo disc. Hudson's victory is bittersweet, coming several months after the killings of her mother, brother and nephew. In her acceptance speech, Hudson gushed: "I'm just in awe right now. ... I would like to thank my family in heaven and those who are here today."

■ ■ ■

JT MAKES EVERYTHING BETTER: Justin Timberlake performing "Let's Stay Together" alongside Al Green was a top-notch moment. Yeah, Keith Urban and Boyz II Men were somewhere on stage, but all eyes were on Timberlake's smooth moves and harmonies with Green.

■ ■ ■

JONAS BROTHERS' WORST NIGHTMARE: Poor Nick and Joe Jonas, two-thirds of the pop-rock phenomenon. Who knows what went through the siblings' minds when their respective exes, teen phenoms Miley Cyrus and Taylor Swift, took center stage to perform an acoustic duet of Swift's song "Fifteen."

■ ■ ■

BEST PERFORMANCE AND WORST OUTFIT BY A PREGNANT WOMAN: Rapper M.I.A., who was due to give birth Grammy night, held her own during an all-boys' rap summit on "Swagga Like Us" with Jay-Z, Kanye West, Lil Wayne and T.I. But, oh, that outfit. She exposed her belly in a sheer black top - or was it a dress? - that had a bikini cutout design, strategically covering her chest.

■ ■ ■

KANYE EGO MOMENT OF THE NIGHT: West showed some sour grapes at not being recognized for being the greatest gift the music world has ever seen. The brash hip-hop star and singer Estelle presented the award for Best New Artist, and West couldn't resist slamming Grammy for bestowing the honor to past winners John Legend and Amy Winehouse "but somehow, not to either one of us."

■ ■ ■

A TRIBUTE TO NEW ORLEANS: Robin Thicke, Lil Wayne and Allen Toussaint did the city justice with their rousing, soulful collaboration, supported by a brass band that had the audience on its feet.

■ ■ ■

HE JUST WANTS TO DANCE: Radiohead frontman Thom Yorke was way more animated than usual, dancing energetically during the band's performance of "15 Step."

■ ■ ■

AN OVERDUE GRAMMY: The Four Tops, which never won music's highest honor, finally received their due with a lifetime achievement award; sadly, the group's lone surviving member, Abdul "Duke" Fakir, could not share it with his three former bandmates. But he did turn out one of the night's more memorable performances, joined by Smokey Robinson, Ne-Yo and Jamie Foxx in a medley of the band's greatest hits.

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Pink Panther 2

Friday		4:10	7:10	9:40
Saturday	1:15	4:10	7:10	9:40
Sunday	1:15	4:10	7:10	
Mon and Tues		4:10	7:10	

Steve Martin, Andy Garcia
Comedy, Mystery • Rated PG

Synopsis
The continuing adventures of Inspector Jacques Clouseau. When legendary treasures from around the world are stolen, including the priceless Pink Panther Diamond, Chief Inspector Dreyfus (John Cleese) is forced to assign Clouseau to a team of international detectives and experts charged with cathcing the thief and retrieving the stolen artifacts.

Push

Friday		4:15	7:30	9:30
Saturday	1:10	4:15	7:30	9:30
Sunday	1:10	4:15	7:30	
Mon and Tues		4:15	7:30	

Chris Evans, Dakota Fanning
Thriller Supernatural • Rated PG 13

Synopsis
The Division, a shadowy government agency, is genetically transforming citizens into an army of psychic warriors and brutally disposing of those unwilling to participate. Nick Gant, a second-generation telekinetic or mover, has been in hiding since the Division murdered his father more than a decade earlier. He has found sanctuary in densely populated Hong Kong, the last safe place on earth for fugitive psychics like him, but only if he can keep his secret a gift.

Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat

Friday		4:25	7:20	9:50
Saturday	1:30	4:25	7:20	9:50
Sunday	1:30	4:25	7:20	
Mon and Tues		4:25	7:20	

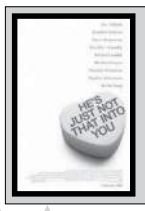
Ai-Ai de las Alas, Eugene Domingo
Comedy • Rated PG

Synopsis
With the one, big, happy family that she has, any woman would admire Ina Montecillo (Ai-Ai de las Alas) as the embodiment of a perfect mother. But after more than 40 years of doing everything for her family, she realizes she hasn't done anything for herself. Ina then embarks on a journey of finding her self-worth that surprisingly lands her as the president of the Philippines!

Coraline

Friday		4:05	7:25	9:35
Saturday	1:20	4:05	7:25	9:35
Sunday	1:20	4:05	7:25	
Mon and Tues		4:05	7:25	

Dakota Fanning, John Hodgman
Fantasy, Animated • Rated PG



He's Just Not That Into You

Friday		4:00	7:00	9:45
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	9:45
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Mon and Tues		4:00	7:00	

Jennifer Aniston, Scarlett Johansson
Romatic Comedy • Rated PG 13

★ ★ ★

Taken

Friday		4:30	7:15	9:55
Saturday	1:25	4:30	7:15	9:55
Sunday	1:25	4:30	7:15	
Mon and Tues		4:30	7:15	

Liam Neeson, Maggie Grace
Action, Drama, Thriller • Rated PG 13

Paul Blart, Mall Cop

Friday		4:20	7:05	10:00
Saturday	1:05	4:20	7:05	10:00
Sunday	1:05	4:20	7:05	
Mon and Tues		4:20	7:05	

Kevin James, Jayma Mays
Comedy • Rated PG

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'Slumdog' named best picture at UK film awards

LONDON (AP)—Rags-to-riches story "Slumdog Millionaire" continued its fairy-tale journey Sunday, winning seven prizes, including best picture, at the British Academy Film Awards and sealing its place as favorite for the Oscars later this month.

Kate Winslet and Mickey Rourke also gained Oscar momentum with acting wins—Winslet for her role as a former Nazi concentration camp guard in "The Reader," Rourke for his career-reviving performance as a washed-up athlete in "The Wrestler." Heath Ledger won a posthumous supporting actor award for The Dark Knight."

"It's such a pleasure to be back here, out of the darkness," said Rourke.

After her onstage emotional meltdown at the Golden Globes last month, Winslet was a model of composure, thanking her parents, sitting in the audience, "who I will not look at right now, otherwise I will burst into tears."

"Slumdog," Danny Boyle's film about a Mumbai street boy's rise from poverty to game-show triumph, went into the ceremony with 11 nominations and won prizes for best film, best director, original screenplay, music, cinematography, editing and sound.

The low-budget film, shot partly in Hindi, has gone from rank outsider to Academy Awards favorite since it won four trophies at the Golden Globe awards last month and became a box-office hit.

Its makers are still getting used to the change.

"I thought at one stage we were going straight to DVD," said screenwriter Simon Beaufoy.

The film has caused controversy in India, where some have complained it shows the country in an unflattering light, and others have said its title insults the poor.

British actress Kate Winslet poses with her award after winning the Leading Actress award for her role in 'The Reader', at the British Academy Film Awards 2009 at The Royal Opera House in London, England, Sunday, Feb. 8, 2009. AP

Boyle dedicated his award partly to the people of Mumbai, where it was shot—and also to people closer to home.

"The wiring in my dad's house blew overnight, and it's just a a big shout-out to everyone who helped him get the extension cable in so he could watch this on television," Boyle said.

The London awards, popularly known as the BAFTAs, have a reputation for predicting who will win at the Academy Awards in Los Angeles. All four of last year's acting prize winners went on to take home Oscars.

Winslet, Rourke, Meryl Streep, Daniel Craig and Penelope Cruz were among the celebs who braved a wintry London drizzle—and hundreds of screaming fans—to walk the red carpet in front of the grand, neoclassical Royal Opera House.

The crowd's biggest cheers were for Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie—he wearing a mustache, she an elegant, old-Hollywood strapless black-and-yellow Armani dress.

Cruz was named best supporting actress for Woody Allen comedy "Vicky Christina Barcelona."

Ledger's widely anticipated victory was the only win for the "The Dark Knight" from nine nominations. Clint Eastwood's L.A. noir "Changeling" was nominated in eight categories but won none.

"The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," also lost out, taking just three awards—production design, hair and makeup, and visual effects—from 11 nominations.

The 6,000 voting academy members rewarded the quirky and eclectic. Tightrope-walking documentary "Man on Wire" was named best British film, and the prize for best original screenplay went to Ireland's Martin McDonagh for hit man comedy "In Bruges."

Director and Monty Python member Terry Gilliam was given an Academy Fellowship, a lifetime achievement award.

Pinewood and Shepperton studios, mainstays of British filmmaking for decades, were awarded for outstanding British contribution to cinema.

"WALL-E" took the prize for animated feature, French drama "I've Loved You So Long" was named best film not in the English language, and Steve McQueen won the award for best first film for his directorial debut, "Hunger," about Irish hunger striker Bobby Sands.

In the acting categories, Winslet defeated Jolie for the missing-child drama "Changeling," Streep for the moral thriller "Doubt" and Scott Thomas for "I've Loved You So Long."

Rourke beat "Slumdog Millionaire's" Dev Patel, Sean Penn for "Milk," Frank Langella for "Frost/Nixon" and Pitt for "Benjamin Button.

'Milk,' 'Slumdog Millionaire' win top WGA awards

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Oscar contenders "Milk" and "Slumdog Millionaire" won top honors Saturday at the Writers Guild of America Awards.

Dustin Lance Black won the original screenplay prize for "Milk," a biography of murdered slain gay-rights leader Harvey Milk.

The adapted screenplay award for "Slumdog Millionaire" went to Simon Beaufoy, who based it on a novel by Vikas Swarup about an Indian street orphan's journey of survival and love.

"Slumdog Millionaire" has been an unlikely hit. The low-budget feature has 10 Oscar nominations, including best picture, and also has taken awards at the Golden Globes and from the Producers Guild of America, Directors Guild of America and the Screen Actors Guild.

"Milk" has eight Academy Award nominations, including best picture and best actor for Sean Penn.

Ari Folman won the documentary screenplay award for "Waltz with Bashir." The film, which is nominated in the foreign-language category at the Academy Awards, is an animated study of an Israeli soldier struggling to recall suppressed memories of his involvement in the war with Lebanon.

In television categories, writers for NBC's "30 Rock" and AMC's "Mad Men" won in the comedy and drama categories, respectively. Both also won WGA awards last year: "30 Rock" for TV comedy and "Mad Men" for new series.

Some of the other awards were:

■ New Series: "In Treatment."

■ Episodic Drama: "Breaking Bad" (Pilot).

■ Episodic Comedy: "30 Rock" (Succession).

■ Animation: "The Simpsons" (Apocalypse Cow).

■ Daytime Serials: "As the World Turns."

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

'He's Just Not That Into You' woos with $27M debut

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Movie fans are into "He's Just Not That Into You." The ensemble romance has gotten a jump on Valentine's Day to lead the weekend box office with a $27.5 million debut. The movie has knocked off the previous weekend's top flick—the abduction thriller "Taken"—which has dropped to second place with $20.3 million. The cast of the new leader includes Jennifer Aniston, Scarlett Johansson, Ben Affleck, Drew Barrymore and Jennifer Connelly. Two movies featuring Dakota Fanning have opened in the top 10—the animated adventure "Coraline" at No. 3 with $16.3 million and the sci-fi thriller "Push" at No. 6 with $10.2 million. Steve Martin's Inspector Clouseau sequel "The Pink Panther 2" is No. 5 with a debut of $12 million.

Fire strikes Mass. house used by Henry Fonda

WOODS HOLE, Mass. (AP)—Fire has destroyed a house in a Massachusetts coastal town where Henry Fonda and Jimmy Stewart sharpened their acting skills in the 1920s and '30s. The house in Woods Hole was used as a practice spot by an up-and-coming theater group known as the University Players because their founders were students at Harvard, Princeton and Radcliffe. In 1928, the group—including Fonda—raised enough money to raise the curtain for their first play. By the end of their first summer they had grossed $20,000. Stewart joined the group in 1932. The Cape Cod Times reports that fire swept through the second floor of the house on Tuesday.

Sri Lankan watches TV 72 hours to set world record

STOCKHOLM (AP)—Suresh Joachim has broken his own Guinness world record for nonstop broadcast-television watching, clocking 72 hours in the Swedish capital. "I feel fine, I drank between 25 and 30 cups of coffee," Joachim said Sunday. His previous record was 69 hours, 48 minutes, set in 2005. Joachim, a Sri Lanka native who lives in Toronto, watched three seasons of the drama series "24" featuring Kiefer Sutherland, said Swedish TV4 spokeswoman Janina Witkowski.

Photos posted online irk woman preferring privacy

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I am a private person by nature and avoid doing a lot of posting on the Internet because of it. My problem is a friend I'll call "Maria," who constantly posts pictures of our outings with friends on her Web site for everyone to see.

The photos themselves are not embarrassing, I just prefer not having my face plastered all over the Internet. Most recently, Maria posted photographs from my wedding without asking me, and it really bothered me. I understand that she is an outgoing person who enjoys sharing details of her life, but I feel like my privacy has been invaded.

I am not the only person in our group that feels this way. How do we ask her to stop posting these images without offending her?

OVEREXPOSED IN SAN FRANCISCO

DEAR OVEREXPOSED: You do it by telling Maria—with a smile—that posting your pictures on her Web site makes you uncomfortable and to please stop it.

If you don't have the courage to confront her one-on-one, then do it as a group. Should Marie "forget" and continue posting pictures you'd rather not appear online, remember to duck when she whips out her camera.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Would you mind settling a debate? My friend Tony was born in New York. His parents moved the family to Florida when he was 6.

Tony's wife was born and raised in New York, and he says he is "from New York." She disagrees and tells him he is from Florida because he was raised there.

When someone asks, "Where are you from?" (geographically), what is the correct response?

BORN IN JERSEY, RAISED IN FLORIDA

DEAR BORN/RAISED: What often prompts that question is a regional or a foreign accent, and some people become defensive when asked where they are from. In states like Florida, Arizona, Nevada and California the question often comes up because so many residents have moved from somewhere else.

When Tony is asked, it might be more accurate to respond, "I was born in New York and raised in Florida," and his wife should not need to correct him. (Dear Abby rule for a successful marriage: Don't start arguments over things that are inconsequential.)

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am married for the second time and have added two boys to my three. My stepsons are great, but I do have one challenge. Their mother can sometimes be "excessive." She buys them expensive gifts for no reason, allows them to drink sugary soft drinks, etc. This is very different from how I parent my sons.

Yesterday, the younger one was showing us his wiggly tooth (his first) and said he would be taking it to his mom's house because she leaves $20 while we only give $1! So far, I have taken the grin-and-bear-it route. I'm curious as to your take on the situation.

TOOTH FAIRY IN GAITHERSBURG, MD.

DEAR TOOTH FAIRY: Your husband's ex may feel guilty about the divorce and be using gifts to make it up to her boys, or she may be trying to one-up you. It is also possible that this is the way her mother raised her -- in a household where $20 for a lost tooth was not unusual and sugary soft drinks were a staple. So keep smiling and try not to let it get to you.

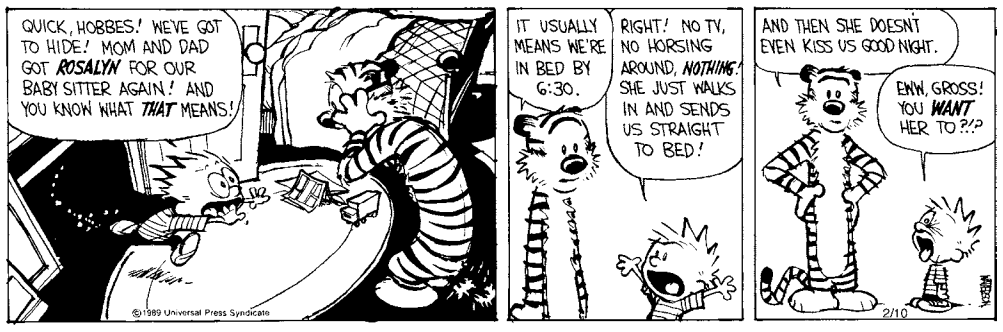
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $12 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


QUICK, HOBBES! WE'VE GOT TO HIDE! MOM AND DAD GOT ROSALYN FOR OUR BABY SITTER AGAIN! AND YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS!
©1989 Universal Press Syndicate
IT USUALLY MEANS WE'RE IN BED BY 6:30.
RIGHT! NO TV, NO HORSING AROUND, NOTHING! SHE JUST WALKS IN AND SENDS US STRAIGHT TO BED!
AND THEN SHE DOESN'T EVEN KISS US GOOD NIGHT.
EWW, GROSS! YOU WANT HER TO?!?
2/10

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By Jim Davis

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WHAT HAVE I DONE TO DESERVE THIS?!!
SAY... I RECOGNIZE THAT VOICE...
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WELCOME BACK, SEÑOR ARBUCKLE
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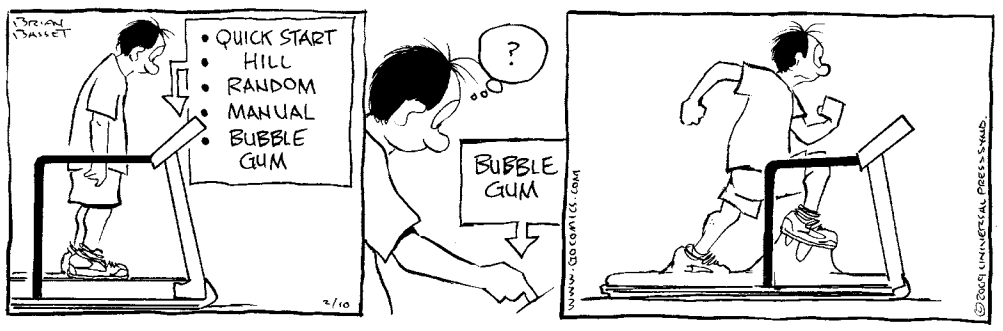
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 GIs' dinner
5 Watch chain
8 Magician's stick
12 Wheel holder
13 Spring mo.
14 Sheltered
15 "Once — a time"
16 Raze
18 Inside information
20 That is (Lat.)
21 Historic time
22 Enemy
23 Ringo or Brenda
26 Insult
30 "Alley —"
31 Scull tool
32 Zodiac feline
33 Disappointment
36 Passenger
38 Puncturing implement
39 Hamburger holder
40 Talia of "Rocky"
43 Twilight start
47 Confinement measure
49 Canal zone
50 Reed instrument
51 Coq au —
52 Slithery swimmers
53 Former German capital
54 Rocker Winehouse
55 Foolish one

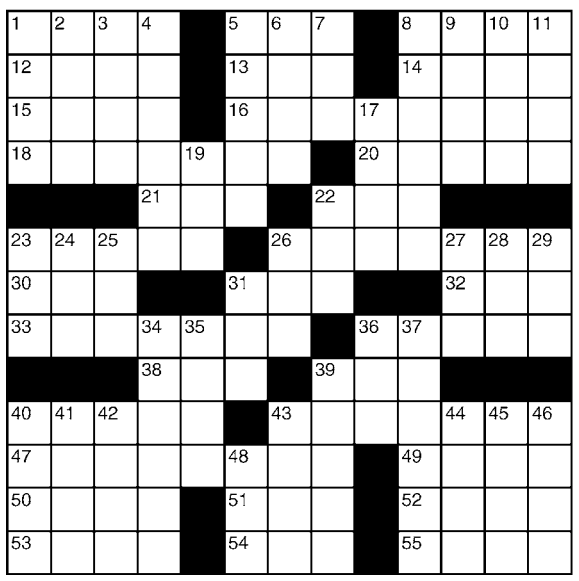
DOWN

1 Handle roughly
2 Big fair
3 Decelerate
4 "Return to —"
5 Islamic decree
6 Admitting customers
7 Support system?
8 Rolled up into a ball
9 Lotion additive
10 11 p.m. telecast
11 Fender bender result
17 Laugh-a-minute
19 Bobby of hockey
22 Bear hair
23 Fa follower
24 Pirouette pivot
25 Suitable
26 Skillet
27 Antiquated
28 Teensy
29 Neither mate
31 Harry Potter's Hedwig, e.g.
34 Dim the lights
35 Still unpaid
36 Skedaddle
37 "Absolutely"
39 Easter symbol
40 Unkempt one
41 Vagrant
42 PC picture
43 Take to the lake
44 Sandwich cookie
45 Executor's document
46 Birds' home
48 Eggs

Solution time: 21 mins.

C	H	I	D	■	C	U	B	■	R	I	N	K
H	O	M	E	■	U	S	E	■	A	D	E	N
A	R	A	B	■	C	A	S	H	M	E	R	E
D	A	M	A	S	K	■	T	I	R	A	D	E
■	■	■	R	O	O	M	■	P	O	T	■	■
J	A	C	K	B	O	O	T	■	D	I	G	S
O	A	R	■	S	E	R	R	A	■	O	N	E
T	H	O	U	■	D	O	U	G	H	N	U	T
■	■	U	G	H	■	N	E	R	O	■	■	■
I	M	P	A	I	R	■	N	A	P	E	R	Y
C	O	I	N	C	I	D	E	■	I	L	I	A
B	L	E	D	■	T	I	S	■	N	U	L	L
M	Y	R	A	■	E	M	S	■	G	L	E	E

Yesterday's answer 2-10



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CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Laura Dern, 42; George Stephanopoulos, 48; Greg Norman, 54; Roberta Flack, 72

Happy Birthday: Someone from your past may be the perfect fit now if you can find a way to reconnect. Uncertainty should be your teacher and your reason for looking back before you move forward. A serious attitude will help to reinforce your need to accomplish something now. Your numbers are 2, 5, 14, 27, 32, 34, 42

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Be careful not to give someone a chance to back you into a corner. A change in your work can be expected but don't worry—whatever you lose, you will gain back through the new connections you make. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You can get a lot done if you put your mind to it. Someone may be trying to pull a fast one on you. Don't get involved helping an organization you know little about. Deception is apparent. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Don't let your emotions influence your decisions. Do what will work best for you and bring you the highest returns. Uncertainty regarding a money deal or someone you are close to will leave you questioning your relationships with everyone. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Make some new rules at home to help you and your loved ones get along better. Plan to spend more quality time together. Serious talks will lead to change, making your life easier and more comfortable both emotionally and physically. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You can talk your way up the ladder and into a good position by sharing your ideas. Don't fool yourself—a partnership being offered may not mean a higher income. Put greater value on what you have to offer. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Get out and enjoy the company of friends. You need some down time to sort through all your options. A new beginning is in sight that will lead to bigger and better personal and professional things. Serious talks will bring good results. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Someone may be keeping a secret from you that might alter the way you think about a job or a career change. Look within and ask yourself what it is you really want. Follow your heart. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): You are up for change and it is going to lead to some negatives as well as positives. If you make the adjustment now, you will be far better positioned to take advantage of some good opportunities in the future. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Not everyone will be on the same page as you. Follow through on your own and, in the end, everyone will jump on board to help. You can develop a closer relationship with someone who can truly help you get ahead. ✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You can settle a matter and win if you don't let someone play on your emotions. An old lover may do more harm than good if you allow him or her to meddle in your current affairs. Keep your plans a secret for now. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): You have so many ideas so consider what is possible to accomplish and what isn't at this time. Don't be suckered into letting someone from your past back into your life. Emotional deception is apparent. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): You'll be torn between what you want and what you can have. Don't let your emotions lead you in the wrong direction. Focus on work, not personal relationships. Let things unfold naturally before you make a decision. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You have the courage, strength and the practicality to see matters through to the end. You are a humanitarian, a powerful leader and an advocate of justice and fair play.

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EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

3			5		6			8
		9				7		
	1			8			5	
1			6		2			4
		7				9		
4			1		8			5
	4			5			8	
		5				2		
7			9		1			6

Difficulty Level ★★ 2/10

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

5	1	8	7	9	4	6	2	3
2	4	9	6	5	3	8	1	7
7	6	3	8	2	1	5	9	4
4	9	1	5	3	7	2	8	6
8	5	7	1	6	2	3	4	9
3	2	6	4	8	9	7	5	1
1	8	4	3	7	5	9	6	2
6	3	2	9	1	8	4	7	5
9	7	5	2	4	6	1	3	8

Difficulty Level ★ 2/09

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

THE TULIP BULB SCANDAL Solution: 10 letters

N	S	T	H	G	U	O	B	E	S	Y	S	T	E	M
O	D	K	D	S	S	F	C	W	R	U	I	N	N	A
I	I	I	N	O	A	I	A	N	D	Y	D	O	H	N
T	T	A	A	A	R	L	N	R	T	I	I	D	L	I
A	E	R	L	P	B	D	S	I	M	T	L	L	E	A
L	K	E	L	C	Y	C	D	A	C	I	E	N	T	(N)
F	R	T	O	E	A	O	R	U	V	S	U	S	(E)	L
E	A	A	H	R	M	Y	D	E	R	T	E	(W)	O	L
D	M	L	P	M	P	O	S	E	R	V	(S)	S	G	Y
L	I	A	O	L	R	T	W	O	R	U	S	H	N	L
O	T	C	E	P	O	O	F	A	D	E	B	T	I	P
S	C	S	R	C	L	Y	H	G	O	O	D	S	D	P
E	I	E	K	F	I	N	A	N	C	I	A	L	D	U
R	V	E	S	P	A	L	L	O	C	R	I	S	I	S
O	P	T	I	O	N	S	S	E	N	I	S	U	B	G

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Banks, Bidding, Bought, Business, Collapse, Commodity, Crisis, Cycle, Debt, Deflation, Escalate, Farm, Financial, Flowers, Fortune, Gilder, Goods, Harvest, Holland, Livestock, Loss, Mania, Market, News, Options, Overproduction, Paid, Ploy, Price, Pyramid, Resold, Rise, Ruin, Rush, Scar, Sell, Slash, Soar, Sudden, Supply, System, Victim

Yesterday's Answer: Xunantunich

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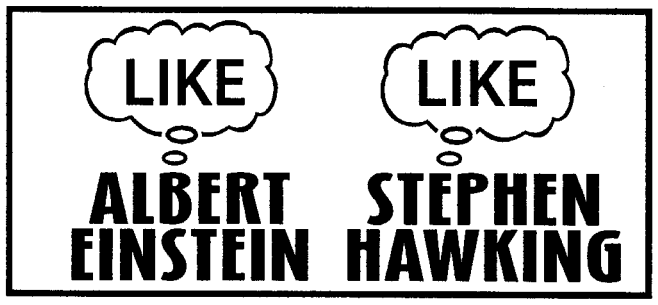

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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN RE THE MATTER OF THE PETITION TO APPOINT GENERAL GUARDIANSHIP FOR: FELIX M. SANTOS, JR.	)	FCD GU CIVIL ACTION NO: 09-0040
Minor Child,	)	DECLARATION OF PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF HEARING
By:	)	
VIRGINIA M. ROSARIO and FELIX M. SANTOS	)	
Petitioners.	)	

We, Virginia M. Rosario and Felix M. Santos, Petitioners herein, hereby declare that we caused the Noticed of Hearing in the above entitled matter to be published in the_____, on _____as shown as "Exhibit_____", attached herein.

Dated this 9th day of January, 2009.

/s/ Virginia M. Rosario-Petitioner
/s/ Felix M. Santos-Petitioner

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A-Rod, union, Yankees mum on steroids allegation

NEW YORK (AP—A day after Alex Rodriguez was linked to steroids, another All-Star offered this suggestion: Make public the entire list of players who failed drug tests.

"I'd be all for the 104 positives being named, and the game moving on if that is at all possible," former Boston ace Curt Schilling wrote on his blog Sunday.

"In my opinion, if you don't do that, then the other 600-700 players are going to be guilty by association, forever," he wrote. "It appears that not only was it 104, but three of the greatest of our, or any, generation appear to be on top of this list."

Rodriguez joined Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens on an ever-growing list of stars tainted by the Steroids Era scandal. *Sports Illustrated* reported Saturday the Yankees slugger, already dubbed "A-Roid" in the tabloids, tested positive for two steroids in 2003.

Rodriguez, the players' union and Major League Baseball were mum Sunday.

"Alex has been out of the country. I expect him back later today and want to confer with my client before saying anything," agent Scott Boras said.

Meanwhile, one recently retired player wanted to know how Rodriguez's name got out. Sean Casey, who spent last season with the Red Sox, said he felt violated by the leak.

"A little bit, because it was supposed to be a survey test and those results were supposed to be confidential," he said. "The only reason we opened up the collective bargaining agreement was on those terms."

The list was compiled from 2003 tests, conducted by baseball to see whether the sport had a problem with drugs. No penalties were to be imposed for a positive test, and the results were supposed to be remain anonymous. Many players seemed to believe the samples would be destroyed.

Casey said he wouldn't be surprised if more names were revealed, "especially because of the witch hunt with Bonds and Clemens."

Bob DuPuy, baseball's chief operating officer, said the purported disclosure shouldn't cause a loss of confidence in the program's confidentiality.

"2003 tests were supposed to be confidential. For whatever reason test results were not destroyed as they were supposed to have," he said in an e-mail to The Associated Press. "Since then, positives have been identified. I am comfortable (the) program is operated currently as it should be."

Baseball began suspensions for players who test positive for steroids for the first time in 2005. Players who test positive for amphetamines at least twice have been suspended since 2006.

Rodriguez has always denied using performance-enhancing drugs. When he was approached by SI last week about the allegations, he said, "You'll have to talk to the union."

Union head Donald Fehr declined comment Sunday.

For a list that was to remain confidential, quite a few people have had access to the players' names, including 17 federal judges and dozens of lawyers, federal prosecutors and investigators. Federal investigators looking for data on 10 players connected to the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative first seized the list of 104 names in April 2004 during a raid on a private laboratory.

Since then, three federal trial court judges and their staffs reviewed the lists in considering related legal actions filed by the players' union, which argued the 104 names were improperly seized because the original search warrant sought only the names of 10 players in the BALCO investigation.

After those judges ruled in favor of the union, government lawyers successfully appealed their case to a three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which said prosecutors had the right to the records of all players who tested positive.

A full 11-judge panel of the 9th Circuit threw out the initial appellate decision that favored the government. The full panel heard the case in December and hasn't ruled.

Spring training starts this week, now sure to open under a cloud of suspicion.

Bonds is set for trial March 2, accused of lying to a grand jury when he said he never knowingly took performance-enhancing drugs, and a grand jury is investigating whether Clemens lied when he told a congressional committee under oath last year that he never knowingly used steroids or human growth hormone.

Rodriguez is a three-time AL MVP and the highest-paid player in the majors. With 553 home runs at age 33, the New York third baseman is considered the most likely successor to Bonds' career homer record of 762.

Many in baseball had hoped a "clean" Rodriguez would help push the Steroids Era further into the past by surpassing Bonds. Instead, Rodriguez finds himself swept up in the drug scandal.

Fans were left to wonder: Would the allegations hurt Rodriguez's Hall of Fame chances, the same way they damaged Mark McGwire?

"We can't be shocked by any names, any more," Schilling said in his blog.

AP

In this May 22, 2003 file photo at left, Texas Ranges Alex Rodriguez rounds the bases after hitting a solo home run in Arlington, Texas. In this July 3, 2008 file photo at right, New York Yankees' Alex Rodriquez runs the bases as he warms up for a baseball game at Yankee Stadium in New York.

Ryan Howard, Phillies agree on 3-year contract

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Ryan Howard just wanted to concentrate on baseball this spring. No squabbles over his contract. No daily questions about his future.

The big slugger got his wish—and a hefty raise, too.

Howard and the Philadelphia Phillies agreed to a $54 million, three-year contract on Sunday, avoiding a potentially contentious arbitration hearing.

The 2006 NL MVP will earn $15 million this season, $19 million next year and $20 million in 2011.

"The things that have happened prior with Ryan, it was really nothing adversarial, although I know with some people it was depicted that way," Phillies general manager Ruben Amaro Jr. said. "We just agreed to disagree. It didn't make us love Ryan any less, and it didn't make Ryan love us any less."

Howard led the majors with 48 homers and 146 RBIs last season while helping the Phillies win their first World Series title since 1980. He batted just .251, struck out 199 times and made 19 errors at first base, but also was runner-up to Albert Pujols for MVP.

"I'm happy to have this done and to know that I'll be in Philadelphia for at least another three years," Howard said in a statement.

The 29-year-old Howard has less than four years service time in the majors, so he wasn't eligible for free agency until after the 2011 season. Now the two sides won't have to worry about any more arbitration hearings.

"We're very pleased to have avoided the arbitration process, not just for this year, but also for the next two," Amaro said. "Ryan is clearly one of the top power hitters and run producers in the major leagues and is a very important part of our championship club."

Howard asked for $18 million in salary arbitration, the third-highest figure submitted since the process began in 1974. Philadelphia offered him $14 million, a raise of $4 million. A hearing was scheduled for later this week.

Howard won his arbitration case last year when he was awarded $10 million, the highest figure given a victorious player.

The Phillies avoided arbitration with all 10 eligible players. They gave ace left-hander Cole Hamels a $20.5 million, three-year contract. The team's payroll on opening day will exceed $130 million; it was $98 million last year.

A fifth-round draft pick in 2001, Howard quickly established himself as one of the premier sluggers in the majors once he finally reached the big leagues. His path to Philadelphia initially was blocked by Jim Thome, who signed an $85 million, six-year contract in December 2002.

An injury to Thome during the 2005 season paved the way for Howard, who had 22 homers and 63 RBIs in just 88 games to win the NL Rookie of the Year award.

He followed that up with one of the best sophomore seasons in history. Howard had 58 homers, 149 RBIs and a .313 average in '06, nearly lifting the Phillies into the playoffs. He batted .268 with 47 homers and 136 RBIs in '07 in what was considered a down year for him.

Since moving into the starting lineup for good on July 1, 2005, Howard leads the majors in home runs (174) and RBIs (493).

Most impressive, he's done it with raw, natural power and a sweet left-handed stroke. Howard's name has never been linked to steroid allegations in an era when many star players have come under scrutiny for using performance-enhancing drugs. The 6-foot-4, 252-pound Howard comes from a big family and has two brothers bigger than him.

With his contract settled, Howard can focus on having a better start. He has a .230 average in April, his lowest in any month. Last year, he batted just .168 the first month.

Perhaps that's why Howard already started training in Florida long before his teammates are due to report. Pitchers and catchers arrive in Clearwater on Saturday.

"Ryan wants to be a complete player," Amaro said. "He's motivated to do that. Ryan is the kind of guy who won't be satisfied with the numbers he's already put up. And obviously that's beneficial to our club."

Report: Woods' wife gives birth to a son

SAN DIEGO (AP)—On the day Tiger Woods usually hoists a trophy at Torrey Pines, a newspaper reported Sunday night that the world's No. 1 golfer was busy with the birth of his first son.

The *San Diego Union-Tribune*, citing an unidentified person with ties to the Woods family, reported that Elin Woods gave birth for the second time. They had a daughter, Sam Alexis, in June 2007 on the day after the U.S. Open.

Woods did not have an announcement about the birth on his Web site, where he reports his news. Neither his agent nor his spokesman immediately returned messages seeking comment.

The 33-year-old Woods is a six-time winner of the Buick Invitational, where he also won the U.S. Open last summer for his 14th career major. That was the last tournament he has played because of knee surgery a week later that ended his 2008 season. He is expected to return before the Masters, possibly as early as the Accenture Match Play Championship on Feb. 25.

He wrote in a newsletter last week that his return to golf depends largely on the birth of his baby, "which is due pretty soon."

"That takes precedent over anything I do golf-wise," Woods wrote. "Elin, Sam and I are very excited for the new baby to arrive, although that's when the real lack of sleep begins."

Woods was the only child born of his parents, Earl and Tida Woods. He had said after his marriage in 2004 that he looked forward to having more than one child.

Nick Watney won the Buick Invitational on Sunday, the sixth time that Woods has been unable to defend a title since his knee surgery.

Lakers stop Cavaliers' home win streak

CLEVELAND (AP)—No second All-Star. No triple-double for LeBron James. And now, no more home winning streak. It's been a rough few days for the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Lamar Odom scored a season-high 28 points, Kobe Bryant added 19 and the streak-breaking Los Angeles Lakers handed Cleveland its first loss at home this season, 101-91 on Sunday.

The Cavaliers came in 23-0 at Quicken Loans Arena, but were stopped by the Lakers, who ended Boston's 19-game winning streak on Christmas Day and halted a 12-game run by the Celtics earlier this week.

James finished with 16 points on just 5-of-20 shooting for Cleveland, which hadn't lost at home since Game 5 against Washington in the first round of last season's playoffs.

The Lakers weren't intimidated in the NBA's rowdiest arena and went 6-0 on a road trip that also included stops in Minnesota, Memphis, New York, Toronto and Boston.

Pau Gasol added 18 points with 12 rebounds for Los Angeles, which played a solid all-around game and made just six turnovers—none over the final 19:28. The Lakers' trip started rocky with center Andruw Bynum injuring his knee against the Grizzlies, but it couldn't have ended any better.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas scored 22 to lead Cleveland. Mo Williams, whose All-Star snub had infuriated the Cavs, scored 19 and James finished with 12 assists and eight rebounds. It was James' first game since his apparent historic triple-double at Madison Square Garden was downgraded when the league took away one of his 10 rebounds.

Odom, who added a season-best 17 rebounds, scored 15 in the third quarter, when the Lakers outscored the Cavaliers 31-16 to turn a 10-point deficit into a 82-77 lead entering the fourth.

Odom scored 13 of Los Angeles' last 16 points to close the quarter, capping his one-man scorefest with a two-handed dunk off a miss in the final second as the Lakers became just the fourth team this season to lead Cleveland at home after three.

The Lakers pushed their lead to 10 before the Cavaliers rallied and closed to 93-89 on two free throws by Ilgauskas with 3:06 left. But Bryant, who was battling flulike symptoms, hit a high-arching fadeaway, and Gasol dropped one of two free throws to make it 96-89 when the jumbo scoreboard above midcourt inside Quicken Loans Arena went dark, a symbolic moment for Cleveland's players and fans.

James was stripped on the Cavs' next possession, and Gasol made two more free throws and scored on a putback as the Lakers put an exclamation point on one of their biggest wins this season.

Cleveland's crowd was at a playoff pitch from the outset for one of the most anticipated games of the season, a matchup of the league's top stars, both leading MVP candidates, and two of the NBA's best teams.

But the game never materialized into a Bryant vs. James affair as Odom stole the spotlight.

Earlier this week, Lakers coach Phil Jackson attributed some of Cleveland's dominance at home to a raucous crowd that may influence the officials.

"They all wear No. 23 and help him throw that (expletive) up in the air when he's at the scorer's desk," Jackson said. "He gets away with murder, on top of it, on his home court."

Jackson slightly backed off from those remarks before the game.

"I'm just saying, it's home court," he said. "There are going to be more fans who will be involved in every bump and grind and whatever happens individually to him. Those things will affect the decisions of referees."

James hadn't heard Jackson's remarks.

"Me get calls?" he said in a disbelieving tone. "You guys know Phil. He always makes a comment before a big game or rivalry game. He always says something to throw people's focus off. But you guys know that I don't get as many calls as I should get. We're not going to go there."

James was careful not to complain about losing his triple-double in New York, but he was clearly miffed by the league's decision.

"Um. Should I say something?" he wondered before opting to keep his opinion a secret. "We won the basketball game and that's all that matters."

AP

Los Angeles Lakers' Lamar Odom (7) dunks against the Cleveland Cavaliers in an NBA basketball game Sunday, Feb. 8, 2009, in Cleveland.

Spurs 105, Celtics 99

At Boston, Roger Mason pulled up and leaned into a 3-pointer with 20.4 seconds left, and Tim Duncan scored 23 points with 13 rebounds to lead San Antonio past Boston.

Kevin Garnett scored 26 points with 12 rebounds, Paul Pierce had 19 and eight and Rajon Rondo had 16 assists for the Celtics.

Matt Bonner scored a season-high 23 points and Manu Ginobli had 19 as a reserve for the Spurs.

Trail Blazers 109, Knicks 108

At Portland, Oregon, Brandon Roy scored at the final buzzer to give Portland a victory over New York.

Travis Outlaw made a jumper with 31.9 seconds left to pull Portland within one at 108-107, and Al Harrington missed a layup on the other end for New York. The Trail Blazers called a timeout with 4.3 seconds left before Roy took an inbound pass from Rudy Fernandez and drove for the winning layup.

Roy finished with 19 points and eight assists, while Outlaw led the Blazers with 23 points. Greg Oden had 17 points and 12 rebounds for his 15th double-double of the season, and added a career-high six blocked shots.

David Lee led the Knicks with 29 points and 11 rebounds.

Magic 101, Nets 84

At Orlando, Florida, Dwight Howard had 30 points and 16 rebounds to lift the Orlando to a victory over New Jersey, which played without Vince Carter.

Mickael Pietrus added 17 points, and Hedo Turkoglu scored 15 for the Magic.

Devin Harris had 28 points and 12 assists, and Brook Lopez added 19 points and 12 rebounds for the Nets.

Carter missed the game with a hyperextended right elbow.

Heat 96, Bobcats 92

At Miami, Dwyane Wade shook off flu-like symptoms to score 22 points and regain the NBA scoring lead, and rookie Mario Chalmers scored 16 and added a career-best 13 assists as Miami held off Charlotte.

Daequan Cook added 16 points and Udonis Haslem scored 14 for Miami, which shot a season-best 56 percent and won for the second time in its last six games. D.J. Augustin scored 27 points for Charlotte, Juwan Howard added 14, while Boris Diaw and Emeka Okafor each scored 10.

Wizards 119, Pacers 117

At Washington, Caron Butler scored 15 straight points, including a game-winning 18-foot shot at the buzzer as Washington beat Indiana.

Butler, who missed the previous two games with the flu, scored 17 points in the fourth quarter and 35 overall as Washington overcame a 110-103 deficit with 5:08 left. Danny Granger led Indiana with 29 points, while T.J. Ford added 23 and Troy Murphy had 18 and 10 rebounds.

Hornets 101, Timberwolves 97

At New Orleans, Sean Marks dunked with 7.8 seconds left to cap a career-high 18-point effort as a short-handed New Orleans overcame the ejection of David West.

Rasual Butler scored 23 and Devin Brown 14 for New Orleans, which won its second straight while handing Minnesota its third-straight loss.

Al Jefferson led Minnesota with 25 points and 14 rebounds, but had to be helped off the court inside the final 30 seconds with an apparent right knee injury.

West was ejected late in the second quarter for a flagrant on Mike Miller.

Thunder 116, Kings 113

At Oklahoma, Kevin Durant scored 39 points as Oklahoma City held off Sacramento after blowing a 19-point second-quarter lead.

Jeff Green and Nick Collison each scored 15 points and Nenad Krstic had 14 for Oklahoma City, which pulled out the win despite missing four of five free throws in the finals seconds. The Thunder have a two-game winning streak for just the third time this season. Beno Udrich scored 29 points, and John Salmons and Kevin Martin each had 23 for the Kings.

Suns 107, Pistons 97

At Auburn Hills, Michigan, Steve Nash scored 15 and had a season-high 21 assists, directing a balanced offense as Phoenix downed Detroit.

Amare Stoudemire had 18 points and seven rebounds. Jason Richardson scored 21, Shaquille O'Neal had nine of his 20 points in the pivotal second period, and Grant Hill added 10 points for the Suns.

Richard Hamilton scored 27 and Allen Iverson had 25 points for the Pistons, who have lost 11 of 17.

Warriors 116, Jazz 96

At Oakland, California, Corey Maggette scored 24 points and Stephen Jackson had 20 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists in Golden State's latest impressive home victory.

Kelenna Azubuike scored 16 points and C.J. Watson added 14 for the Warriors, who routed Phoenix four days earlier in Oakland behind Jackson's first career triple-double. With Jackson again catalyzing the offense, Golden State rolled past the Jazz with a 38-point third quarter and a strong finish.

Deron Williams had 31 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds for the Jazz.

Lakers acquire Morrison via trade; Bobcats land Radmanovic, Brown

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—The Charlotte Bobcats traded managing partner Michael Jordan's first draft pick on Saturday, sending struggling forward Adam Morrison and reserve guard Shannon Brown to the Los Angeles Lakers for forward Vladimir Radmanovic.

Jordan's first major decision after becoming part owner with the final say on all basketball decisions was taking Morrison with the third overall pick in the 2006 draft over Brandon Roy, Rudy Gay and others.

The former Gonzaga star known in college for his shaggy hair and thin mustache never lived up to expectations and had fallen out of favor with first-year coach Larry Brown. He was jettisoned for the 6-foot-10 Radmanovic, who was averaging 5.9 points and 2.5 rebounds a game with the Lakers.

The move is a sign of another failed decision by Jordan, who was widely criticized for selecting Kwame Brown with the No. 1 overall pick in 2001 when he ran the Washington Wizards.

"We definitely wish him well," Bobcats general manager Rod Higgins said of Morrison. "He's a good kid and hopefully he gets an opportunity to play. You never know, he might get a chance to win a (championship) ring."

The move is the third trade the Bobcats have made this season in a roster shakeup under Brown, who is trying to get the fifth-year Bobcats to the playoffs for the first time. Radmanovic will become the 22nd player to suit up for Charlotte this season, an NBA high.

Morrison and Brown were never a good fit. Morrison's defensive deficiencies didn't mesh with Brown's style, and Morrison had failed to hit shots consistently, struggling in a starting role the past four games after small forward Gerald Wallace suffered a partially collapsed lung and a broken rib against the Lakers on Jan. 27.

Morrison, who cut his trademark hair short before this season, will get a chance to crack the Lakers' rotation and become an outside scoring threat. Morrison, who averaged a national-best 28.1 points for Gonzaga in 2005-06, missed all of last season after tearing a knee ligament in a preseason game.

Morrison, due about $5.3 million next season in the final year of his rookie contract, was averaging just 4.5 points while shooting 36 percent from the field and 34 percent from 3-point range.

The deal also gives the Lakers some salary-cap relief. Radmanovic is owed $6.5 million next season and $6.9 million a year later in a player option.

He gives the Bobcats more depth up front. Higgins said Radmanovic will likely play both small and power forward.

"Being a 6-10 guy, obviously he brings some height as well as some athleticism," Higgins said. "He's guy that can make some shots. I think he will fit in with our current roster well."

Shannon Brown was signed in the offseason and had played sparingly until Friday night, when he committed a turnover and had a shot blocked in the closing seconds of a 102-97 loss to Atlanta. A groin injury to starting shooting guard Raja Bell put Brown into the lineup.

Higgins said they were arranging for Radmanovic to fly from Cleveland, where the Lakers play the Cavaliers on Sunday, to Miami. The Bobcats play the Heat Sunday night.

Fitzgerald leads NFC over AFC, 30-21

HONOLULU (AP)—With a huge red lei around his neck and a wide grin that could have stretched across Oahu, Larry Fitzgerald held up the gleaming, silver MVP trophy. It sparkled in the sunshine as much as his game.

The only problem: It wasn't the Lombardi Trophy.

Fitzgerald caught five passes for 81 yards and two touchdowns, 44-year-old John Carney kicked two fourth-quarter field goals, and the NFC rallied to a 30-21 victory over the AFC. The Arizona Cardinals' All-Pro receiver, coming off a record-breaking postseason and a spectacular Super Bowl in a loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers, earned MVP honors.

But he said the victory over the AFC, which featured three members of the Steelers' defense, didn't ease the pain from the Super Bowl.

"No, not one bit," he said.

Fitzgerald also took home keys to a new Cadillac.

"I'm just glad we won, that's the most important thing," he said.

On a sweltering day, with 60 percent humidity, Kurt Warner started for the NFC and played just one series before making way for Brees. Warner was just 1-of-2 for 8 yards.

"I would've liked to have won last week and not this week, if I could switch them out," he said.

Fitzgerald caught a 46-yard scoring pass from Drew Brees before the half and a 2-yard TD pass from Eli Manning for the go-ahead score with 4:07 to play.

The NFC defense took care of the rest.

AP

NFC wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald, left, of the Arizona Cardinals, pulls in a touchdown catch during the second quarter of the Pro Bowl NFL football game at Aloha Stadium, Sunday, Feb. 8, 2009, in Honolulu.

Manning, making his Pro Bowl debut, was 8-of-14 for 111 yards. While big brother Peyton had better stats, 12-of-17 for 151 yards and a TD, Eli got the win.

"He didn't play the whole second half, so it's not about beating my brother, it's just about having fun," Eli Manning said.

The Manning brothers were the first quarterback brothers in Pro Bowl history. And Carney, who was a perfect 3-for-3, became the oldest player in the game's history. He booted a 48-yarder with 2:06 remaining to make it 27-21 and sealed the win with a 26-yarder with 32 seconds to go.

Sunday's all-star game ended a successful 30-year run at Aloha Stadium, with a sellout every year. The Pro Bowl will be played in Miami next year, a week before the Super Bowl. The NFL, which has been looking to increase the profile of the game, hopes to bring the game back to Hawaii.

The players, who spent most of the week by the beach and sipping umbrella-adorned mai tais, were pretty unanimous in wanting the game to return.

For Warner, the question now is whether this was his final game in the NFL or, as a free agent, will he opt to continue playing at age 38?

"I don't know right now," Warner said. "Again, when I have a feeling one way or the other, I'll let everyone else know. I don't have a time frame. This is the first time right now that I am done having to think about football for a while, and I'm going to enjoy that part of it, enjoy my wife, enjoy my kids and then we'll make a decision as soon as we can."

The AFC was looking to hula dance into halftime with a comfortable 14-3 cushion after Kerry Collins connected with Owen Daniels on a 9-yard scoring pass with 28 seconds left in the half.

However, that was more than enough the time for the NFC, with all its weapons.

The NFC took over at its 45 with 19 seconds left after a nice kickoff return by Clifton Smith. They ran two plays before Larry Fitzgerald hauled in Brees' 46-yard bomb with fellow All-Pro Cortland Finnegan on his back as time expired to pull the NFC to 14-10.

It made for two huge end-of-the-half plays in consecutive weeks for Fitzgerald. But this time, rather than trying—and failing—to chase down James Harrison on his 100-yard interception returned for a TD, Fitzgerald was the one celebrating.

Fitzgerald also beat Finnegan on his second score.

"These guys are such elite players, it doesn't take much time to get in the groove with these players," Fitzgerald said. "These guys were great."

The usual high-scoring affair surprisingly also featured plenty of defense. Despite rules such as no blitzing linebackers and safeties, the quarterbacks were feeling the heat, at times buried by the defensive line. None of the passes had any room for error on throws against the speedy defensive backs.

The AFC had a chance to take the lead late, but Julius Peppers got in the way. Down by six, the AFC started its drive on its 20 with 4:03 remaining and got to midfield. Peppers then swatted a pass by Jay Cutler with his left hand and came up with the interception that led to Carney's 48-yard field goal.

There were three straight drives ending with a turnover in a span of about 2 minutes in the third quarter alone, including two by Collins.

The second led to the NFC's first lead of the game, 17-14, late in the third quarter. Jared Allen stripped Collins from behind and scooped up the bouncing ball at the AFC 10. All-Pro Adrian Peterson, last year's Pro Bowl MVP, finished it off with a 10-yard run.

Pinned on its 4, the AFC came out firing behind the league MVP. Peyton Manning completed passes of 20, 18, 22, 4, and 6 yards to five players before hitting Tony Gonzalez for the score on a high-arcing, 19-yard pass.

Watney rallies from 5 behind to win Buick

SAN DIEGO (AP)—One of the lessons Nick Watney took from playing for his uncle at Fresno State was that winning is never easy. That's why he didn't lose hope Sunday in the Buick Invitational when he was three shots behind with five holes to play.

First came a mini-collapse by John Rollins, a combination of bad swings and bad breaks.

Then it was a 40-foot birdie putt across the 16th green by Watney, who remembered the severity of the slope at the back of the green from when he three-putted at the U.S. Open last summer at Torrey Pines.

Watney never took the lead until the final shot of the tournament, a 2 1/2-foot birdie putt to complete a five-shot comeback for his second career victory.

"If you're going to lead for one hole, this is the time to do it," he said.

Watney, who appeared to be along for the ride for most of the final round, birdied two of his last three holes and didn't drop a shot over the final 11 holes in closing with a 4-under 68 for a one-shot victory.

No shot was more important than his hybrid from 235 yards on the par-5 18th that easily cleared the pond and settled on the top shelf of the green. He calmly rolled his long eagle putt down the slope to just inside 3 feet, and knocked in the winning putt after Rollins failed to get up-and-down from the bunker.

Watney started to deliver a roundhouse fist pump, similar to when Tiger Woods made birdie on the 72nd hole of the U.S. Open to force a playoff in June. But that wouldn't fit his understated personality.

"I'd like to imitate pretty much everything Tiger does," Watney said. "But that was not planned at all. I was more worried about the 3-footer. I just hope the fist pump looked halfway decent."

Rollins let this one get away.

He knocked in a 20-foot eagle putt on the 13th hole to restore his three-stroke margin and appeared to have the tournament in hand. But he hit a poor chip that led to bogey on the 14th, had a plugged lie in a bunker on the 16th that was so miserable he had to scramble to escape with bogey, then pulled his second shot on the 18th into a bunker, missing a 12-foot birdie putt.

"It's unfortunate that I came in with a three-shot lead and couldn't get the victory," Rollins said. "But as I said yesterday, if somebody came out and played a great round of golf and came out on top, then my hat's off to him. And that's exactly what Nick did."

Watney finished at 11-under 277—the same total Ryuji Imada had last year in the Buick Invitational when he was runner-up by eight shots to Woods, whose knee and game was not ready to defend a title he had won the previous four years.

Lucas Glover and Camilo Villegas also had their chances.

Glover briefly was within one shot of the lead and was still in the mix until he pulled his tee shot on the 17th into rough so thick that he had to hit out short of the green and missed a 7-foot par putt. He birdied the last hole for a 68 and tied for third, two shots behind.

Villegas was within one shot until a three-putt from 10 feet on the par-5 sixth, and Rollins' collapse offered the Colombian another chance. But he hit out of the rough and over the green at the 17th to make a bogey, and his 40-foot eagle putt on the 18th hole stopped a few inches above the hole. He closed with a 72.

"A little bogey on 17 kind of made it tough on me," Villegas said. "I knew I had to make the putt on 18, and I gave it a great roll."

Watney was five shots behind going into the final round and was an afterthought most of the day, never getting closer than two shots until the tournament swung in his favor on the 16th—his 40-foot birdie from the fringe, Rollins' bogey from a plugged lie in a bunker.

They traded pars on the 17th, and both were in the fairway on the 18th, in range to go for the green in two.

AP

Nick Watney holds up the winner's trophy after his victory at the Buick Invitational golf tournament Sunday, Feb. 8, 2009, in San Diego.

"In a tournament like this when it's really tight down the stretch, you've got to take it. You've got to grab it," Watney said. "John is a great player, very seasoned, and he wasn't going to give me anything."

Rollins pulled his hybrid into the left bunker, and the best he could do from a tricky lie was blast out 12 feet past the cup. His birdie attempt that would have forced a playoff didn't have a chance.

No Zone trashes Law & Order in just 3 innings

BY NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

No Zone stepped up early and booked one of the quickest wins in the ongoing regular season of the Budweiser Inter-Government/Business Slow-pitch Softball League, a 27-4 beat down of Law & Order Thursday night at the Capital Hill Ball Field.

Sparked by a 19-run explosion in the top of the second inning, No Zone needed just three innings to deliver the severe beating and improved its win-loss record to 9-3 in a tie for fourth to fifth places in the overall standings with Joeten Motors Jets.

No Zone padded a 4-1 lead after one complete inning then all of its 12 players—Kent Kalen, Nick Leon Guerrero, Jerry Ayuyu, Ned Norita, Manny Sablan, Frankie Pangelinan, Bruce Norita, Carl Hocog, Eric David, Kwon Norris, Tony Kapileo, and Jay Tilipao—batted twice in the top of the second where the team collared a total of 19 runs to further pull-away with a 23-1 advantage.

Law & Order got its second run from Jonas Barcinas in the bottom second, while No Zone scored anew with four in the top of the third then winning pitcher Eric David allowed only three hits and two runs from Law & Order in the bottom third to finish the game via mercy rule.

Shortstop Nick Leon Guerrero was perfect in offense, going 4-for-4, including four runs, three RBIs, and a triple. Bruce Norita was 3-for-3 with a run, a double, and five RBIs, Kalen was 3-for-4 with three runs, a double, a triple, and five RBIs, while Tilipau was 3-for-3, including three runs, a double, and four RBIs. Kapileo, for his part, went 2-for-3 and contributed three runs, a double, and three RBIs, with Ayuyu chipping in a 3-for-4 performance spiked by three runs, two doubles, and an RBI.

Jets 6, Legislature 5

Upset-conscious Joeten Motors rallied midway in the game before edging out Legislature, 6-5, to further strengthen its position in the Top 5 with seven more games left before the playoff round.

The Jets shrugged off a 1-5 deficit after three full innings, scoring two runs in the top of the fourth with Cliff Silil scoring on a triple by Ben Taisacan, who then reached home plate following a sacrifice fly by Peter Sablan.

They added three more runs in the fifth when Ernest Rangamar and Jay Cabrera scored on a two RBI single by Jeff Tenorio, who then made the deciding run on a double by Silil.

Silil hit 3- of-3 at bat to come up with a run, two doubles, and an RBI as the Jets dealt Legislature its fifth setback. Legislature slipped to eighth place at 8-5.

Docomo 18, DLNR 10

In another hotly-contested game, Docomo also came from behind to score an 18-10 triumph at the expense of Department of Land and Natural Resources.

With the win, Docomo remained in strong contention with its 9-4 mark and at solo sixth place.

DLNR failed to sustain a 5-3 lead in the third inning and suffered its seventh loss in 13 games to stay in 10th position.

Docomo scored six runs in the fourth, one in the fifth, seven in the sixth, and one in the seventh as against DLNR's four in the sixth and one in the seventh.

Theo Minor led Docomo's offense, going 4-for-4 with four runs and an RBI. The team totaled 26 hits on 50 at bats and had 12 RBIs on the way to victory.

RGA February qualifier this Saturday

Refaluwasch Golf Association will hold its qualifier for its February Ace of the Month Tournament this Saturday, Feb. 14, at the Marianas Country Club.

RGA tournament director Jess Wabol said check-in time for the weekend golf bash is 11am with tee time set an hour later at 12pm. Registration ends at 11:45am and slots will be available for a maximum of 25 players.

Wabol also encouraged current and past members to pay RGA's annual membership fee, which will remain at $25 because of the current economic crisis.

The February Ace is set for Feb. 28.

For more information about RGA's February qualifier and the rest of its tournaments for 2009, contact president Jordan Kosam at 483-4506 or Wabol at 288-1129. ***(PR)***

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	42	11	.792	_
Philadelphia	25	24	.510	15
New Jersey	24	28	.462	17 1 / 2
New York	21	29	.420	19 1 / 2
Toronto	19	34	.358	23

Southeast Division

Orlando	38	12	.760	_
Atlanta	29	21	.580	9
Miami	27	23	.540	11
Charlotte	19	31	.380	19
Washington	11	40	.216	27 1 / 2

Central Division

Cleveland	39	10	.796	_
Detroit	27	22	.551	12
Milwaukee	24	29	.453	17
Chicago	22	29	.431	18
Indiana	20	32	.385	20 1 / 2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	34	15	.694	_
New Orleans	30	18	.625	3 1 / 2
Houston	31	20	.608	4
Dallas	30	20	.600	4 1 / 2
Memphis	14	36	.280	20 1 / 2

Northwest Division

Denver	34	17	.667	_
Portland	31	19	.620	2 1 / 2
Utah	29	23	.558	5 1 / 2
Minnesota	17	33	.340	16 1 / 2
Oklahoma City	13	38	.255	21

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	41	9	.820	_
Phoenix	28	21	.571	12 1 / 2
Golden State	17	35	.327	25
L.A. Clippers	12	39	.235	29 1 / 2
Sacramento	11	41	.212	31

Yesterday's Games
San Antonio 105, Boston 99
L.A. Lakers 101, Cleveland 91
Orlando 101, New Jersey 84
Washington 119, Indiana 117
Miami 96, Charlotte 92
Portland 109, New York 108
Oklahoma City 116, Sacramento 113
New Orleans 101, Minnesota 97
Phoenix 107, Detroit 97
Golden State 116, Utah 96

BUICK INVITATIONAL SCORES

SAN DIEGO (AP)–Scores Sunday from the Buick Invitational, a $5.3 million U.S. PGA Tour event on two par-72 Torrey Pines courses; 7,628-yard South Course, 6,915-yard North Course:

FINAL ROUND

Nick Watney	69-69-71-68	277
John Rollins	70-64-70-74	278
Lucas Glover	69-73-69-68	279
Camilo Villegas	63-70-74-72	279
Matt Jones	70-73-74-64	281
Mathew Goggin	69-70-73-70	282
Bubba Watson	71-68-77-67	283
Ben Crane	69-74-70-70	283
Charley Hoffman	71-66-74-72	283
Luke Donald	70-69-71-73	283
Hunter Mahan	74-70-74-66	284
Bill Haas	72-70-72-70	284
Jeff Klauk	71-73-69-71	284
J.J. Henry	70-71-71-72	284
Aaron Baddeley	66-76-70-72	284
Charles Warren	74-69-68-73	284
Nicholas Thompson	75-70-70-70	285
Paul Goydos	72-66-72-75	285
Webb Simpson	72-73-71-70	286
Dustin Johnson	74-71-72-69	286
Ryuji Imada	70-72-75-69	286
Harrison Frazar	69-70-75-72	286
Dean Wilson	71-73-71-71	286
Scott Sterling	69-72-75-71	287
Padraig Harrington	71-74-74-68	287
Jonathan Kaye	70-73-73-72	288
Jason Dufner	70-70-75-73	288
Retief Goosen	71-71-73-73	288
Robert Garrigus	68-74-73-73	288
Ted Purdy	74-71-70-73	288
Tommy Gainey	77-69-73-69	288
Marc Leishman	74-68-72-74	288
J.B. Holmes	73-70-71-74	288
Tag Ridings	71-72-77-68	288
Lee Janzen	74-72-70-73	289
Aron Price	72-72-73-72	289
Davis Love III	66-77-74-72	289
Jason Day	69-76-70-74	289
Kevin Sutherland	77-68-74-70	289
Rod Pampling	72-74-73-70	289
George McNeill	71-70-71-77	289
Jesper Parnevik	71-74-72-73	290
Brandt Snedeker	75-68-73-74	290
Phil Mickelson	70-72-73-75	290
Tom Pernice, Jr.	75-68-76-71	290
Jarrod Lyle	71-74-70-75	290
Nathan Green	70-72-72-76	290
Charles Howell III	72-71-77-70	290
David Mathis	75-71-74-70	290
Ben Curtis	76-66-73-76	291
John Senden	76-70-73-72	291
Carl Pettersson	77-69-74-71	291
Ricky Barnes	69-73-75-75	292
Bart Bryant	73-69-77-73	292
Glen Day	72-74-73-73	292
Arjun Atwal	72-74-74-72	292
James Nitties	79-67-73-74	293
Pat Perez	73-73-73-74	293
Y.E. Yang	77-69-73-74	293
Rick Price	72-73-75-73	293
Stuart Appleby	68-74-78-73	293
James Driscoll	73-73-74-73	293
Fred Couples	74-70-74-76	294
Kent Jones	70-71-77-76	294
Jason Gore	70-69-80-75	294
John Huston	71-71-79-73	294
Matt Bettencourt	74-72-75-73	294
Parker McLachlin	74-71-72-79	296
D.A. Points	70-72-79-75	296
Gregor Main	70-75-72-80	297

By The Associated Press

LOCAL SCORES

BUDWEISER CAGING STANDINGS

CNMI Nationals	2	0
IT& E	3	1
Ol'Aces	2	1
Quichocho Law Office	1	1
Runnin' Rebels	1	3
Docomo	1	2
Diamond Auto Fixers	0	2

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Men's Division

DCCA	13	0
Freedom Air	9	2
CPA	9	2
No Zone	9	3
Joeten Motor Jets	9	3
Docomo	9	4
Beach Boys	8	3
Legislature	8	5
P&S	6	5
DLNR	6	7
POI	5	6
CRM/DEQ	5	6
CHC	4	8
PSS	4	8
CUC	3	8
Law & Order	3	9
PIC	2	8
Customs	2	8
Mayors	2	10
Hopwood	0	11

Women's Division

NMC	8	1
Finance	4	4
DCCA	4	5
CUC	3	4
CHC	1	6

TOP

From Page 28

Woo Sung defeated Bradley Brostrom, 8-1, Nutting shut out Min Suk Kim, 8-0, and Sung Hoon outlasted Andy Nutting, 8-4. Ji Hoon Ham and Tinian native Benjie Decena will battle for the last semis ticket.

The men's 40-and-above singles is only one semifinalist short after Nanding Cajigan, Richard Brostrom, and Alex Martin nailed the first three Final Four berth.

Cajigan won over Mike Johnson, 8-6, Brostrom whipped Steve Nutting, 8-2, and Martin downed Chuck Sayon, 8-6.

In the men's open singles' lone game, Chris Nelson outclassed Ho Suk Chang, 8-4, to set up a semis duel with Peter Loyola. The three other matches in the men's open singles and the rest of the games in other divisions will be played this weekend until Monday.

In the girls' 18-and-under division, two more games were played Sunday with Thea Minor and Lila Mailman notching their second win.

Thea showed no love lost to older sister Theecel following the former's 8-5 win. Thea won her first game against Jodel Fernandez Saturday, 8-1. Mailman also defeated Fernandez Sunday, 8-1.

In the girls' 10-and-under, Julia Ishikawa marched to the semis in no sweat winning via walkover against Tammy Ackerman.

In the boys' 10-and-under, top seed Carl Dela Cruz led the quarterfinals cast, which also includes Michael Jones, Moris Villanueva, Aaron Lee, Josh Mateo, Colin Ramsey, J.H. Lee, and Kennedy Izuka.

Izuka blanked John Paul Tamayo, 6-0, J.L. Lee downed Clayton Izuka, 7-6 (7-5), Ramsey beat Gee Su Hohn, 6-1, Mateo won via walkover against Steve Goodwin, Aaron whipped Thomas Lim, 6-1, Villanueva defeated Alex Park, 6-0, Jones topped Badha Lee, 6-2, and Dela Cruz pounded Michael Ren, 6-0.

In the mixed-up doubles division of the tournament supported by Department of Public Health's Wise Women Village Project, 15 pairs advanced to the third round.

THREE

From Page 28

Athletes of the Month (January) were swimmer Kai Staal and long distance runner Mamiko Berger-Oshima.

In the Student Athlete of the Month race, there was only one selection in Matt Mancao, who is also a long distance runner.

Staal earned NMASA members' nod after his exploits in the 2009 Junior Pan Pacific Championships at the Leo Palace Resort Swimming Pool in Guam last month.

Staal eclipsed the CNMI 13 to 14 age group record (57.46 seconds), which he himself set three months ago on Saipan, in the 100m freestyle when he timed in at 57.36 in the preliminary race on Day 2 of the six-day meet.

Staal also joined the 50m freestyle preliminary race and beat rival Ken Barcinas of Guam with the CNMI bet clocking in at 25.86 seconds.

The 14-year-old swimmer was also part of Tsunami Saipan's 400m freestyle relay team and his 55.93 seconds in the 100m lap past his 100m freestyle mark of 57.36 seconds in the preliminaries.

Mamiko-Berger was named Female Athlete of the Month for winning the Saipan Marathon, the major event in the 2009 Winter Festival of Runs.

She had a record-breaking run in the 42.195-kilometer marathon en route to a successful title defense.

Oshima finished the race that started and ended at Micro Beach at the American Memorial Park in three hours, 22 minutes, and 45 seconds, breaking her 2008 time of 3:51:58.

She outraced Guam's Noemi Neipert (3:35:35) and Japan's Satomi Yahata (3:37:06) to win back-to-back titles.

Mancao was also a participant in the Winter Festival of Runs, but raced in a shorter course.

He won the 10K race with a time of 40:36 to beat fellow Saipan runners Steve Pixley (42:01) and Yoshi Suzuki (43:24).

ISLANDERS

From Page 28

chances to remain king of Gorilla Games. But the Islanders quickly recovered with a big 25-10 victory in the second set to take the lead at halftime, 46-37.

The opening part of the third set was a neck-and-neck battle with Evenflow scoring back-to-back two-pointers and Islanders answering with a goal.

The third set was tied last at 11-all before the Islanders pulled away en route to a 25-19 win.

Behind by 15 at the end of the third set, 56-71, Evenflow needed to prevail in the fourth set to send the game in overtime or win the fourth set by 16 points to take the outright victory.

With the bragging rights and $50 cash at stake in the game, it seemed neither team wanted to give up in the fourth set, which was in a deadlock for the last time at 25-all.

Evenflow had the chance to break the tie when it served for the set, but the Islanders held their ground, receiving the ball and scoring a two-pointer from the backline for a 27-25 win.

Ben Lisua was the game's heavy hitter firing 18 points on three aces, two goals, two kees, and a xunk.

Ten aces, 18 kees, five goals, and five xunks were scored in Saturday's match.

Gorilla Games is a side event in Rocball league with the biweekly champion facing new challenger every other Saturday. The losing team has to take a break for a month before returning to action and challenging the reigning titlist.

Teams need not to pay entrance fees to join Gorilla Games. Challengers only have to register at the MHS Gymnasium from Monday to Thursday from 5pm to 7pm.

For more information, contact Rocball creator James Feger at 237-3235.

A-Rod, union, Yankees mum on steroids allegation

A day after Alex Rodriguez was linked to steroids, another All-Star offered this suggestion: Make public the entire list of players who failed drug tests. **24**

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Lakers stop Cavaliers' home win streak

No second All-Star. No triple-double for LeBron James. And now, no more home winning streak. It's been a rough few days for the Cleveland Cavaliers. **25**

IT&E rallies past Quichocho Law Office

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

IT&E pulled off a come-from-behind 96-90 victory in its ejection-marred game against Quichocho Law Office in the 2008-2009 BANMI/Budweiser Basketball League Friday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

A bench-clearing altercation erupted in the last 12.1 seconds of the game after both camps traded heated words, forcing league officials to throw four players and two coaches out of the playing court.

League commissioner Gabriel White said there had been intense exchanges of words in the closing minutes of the neck-and-neck game. After a Quichocho basket cut IT&E's lead to two, 90-92, players unfortunately lost patience and started pushing each other, and soon coaches Jun Concepcion and Marvin Deocares entered the court and joined the fray.

Cooler heads quickly stepped in preventing further altercation, but still both teams had casualties in the end with Jon Artates and Bernard Montano of IT&E joining Deocares out of the playing court. Quichocho Law Office's Jun Pantaleon, Mike Umali, and Concepcion were also thrown out of the Ada Gym.

Two free throws each from Jun Estolas and Edzel Mendoza sealed the win for IT&E.

IT&E entered the fourth quarter behind by eight points, 66-74. A 31-17 run in the fourth quarter allowed IT&E to grab the lead and the win, its third in four games.

Quichocho Law Office dropped to 1-1 record.

Estolas led IT&E's rally in the fourth period making nine in the payoff canto. Gyles Ruluked, who was absent in first half, also helped the team's cause making six of his 10 markers in the fourth quarter.

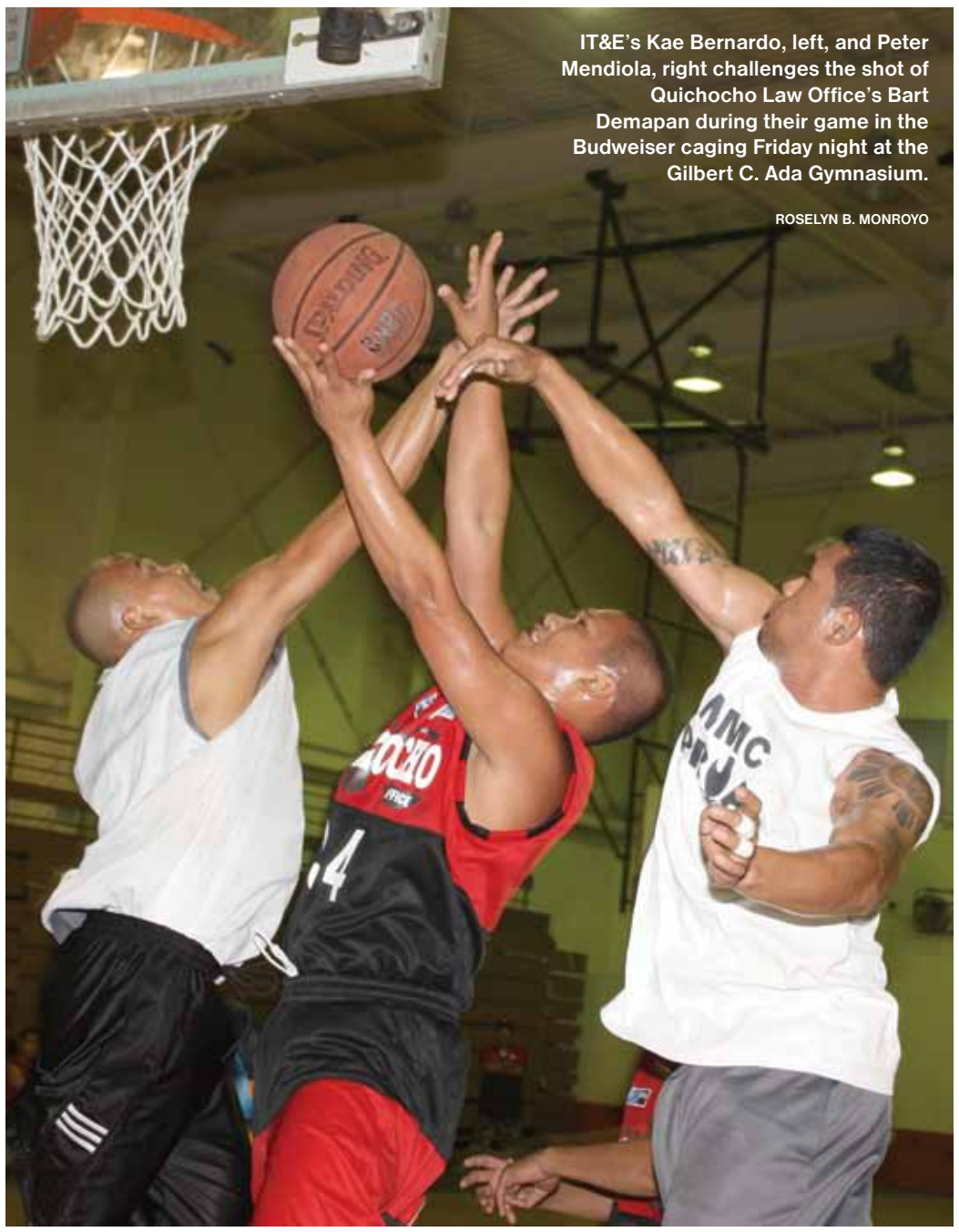
IT&E took a 20-16 lead behind Mendoza's nine points in the firth period. But a barrage of triples from Bonbon Cadagat and Ernie Moises and consecutive inside baskets from Darwin Barbo put Quichocho in front at halftime, 46-43.

Cadagat and Barbo continued to do the damage for Quichocho in the third period to preserve the lead before IT&E worked its way back into the game in the payoff period.

IT&E 96 – Abuel 23, Estolas 18, Mendoza 14, Bernardo 12, Ruluked 10, De Vero 6, Mendiola 5, Montano 4, Ranola 2, De Guzman 2.

Quichocho Law Office 90 – Barbo 24, Cadagat 24, Moises 17, Umali 6, Demapan, Palero 5, Lerio 4, Capalad 4.

Scoring by quarters: 20-16, 43-46, 66-74, 96-90.



IT&E's Kae Bernardo, left, and Peter Mendiola, right challenges the shot of Quichocho Law Office's Bart Demapan during their game in the Budweiser caging Friday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Islanders oust Evenflow in 'Gorilla Games'

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Islanders cut short Evenflow's reign in Gorilla Games in the World Organized Rocball Community League with a 98-81 juiced out win Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Evenflow ruled Gorilla Games two weeks ago, booting out Ghasias Brothers in overtime, 109-101. Ghasias topped the inaugural Gorilla Games early last month, outlasting the Okies in double overtime, 108-84, before the former bowed to Evenflow.

Evenflow suffered the same fate of failing to keep its hold on to the top spot winning only once against the Islanders in their four-set game.

A 27-21 win in the opening set boosted Evenflow's

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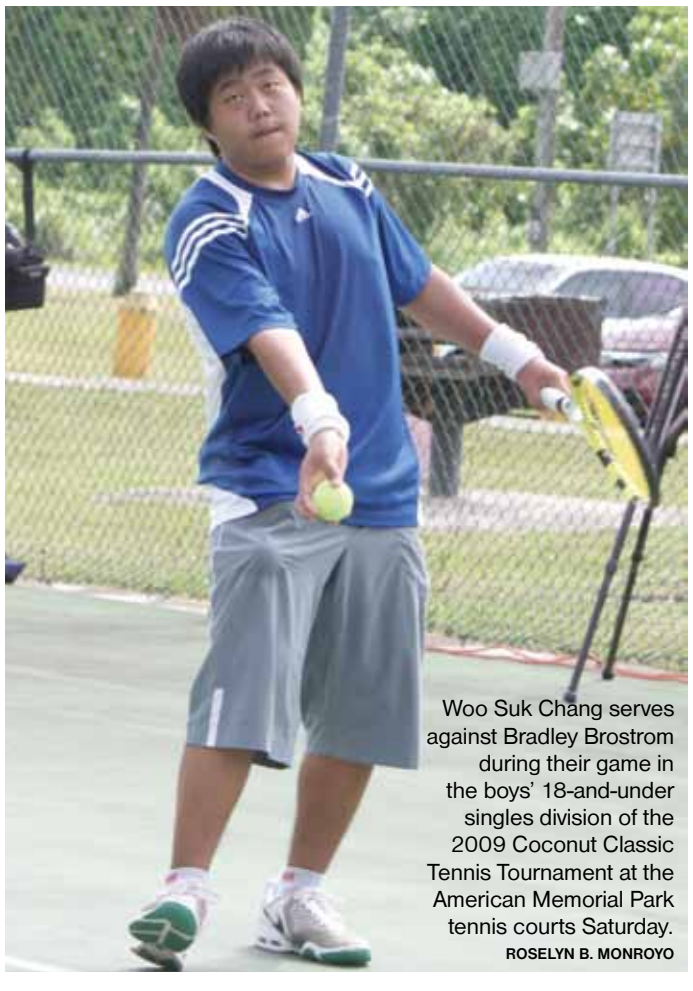

Woo Suk Chang serves against Bradley Brostrom during their game in the boys' 18-and-under singles division of the 2009 Coconut Classic Tennis Tournament at the American Memorial Park tennis courts Saturday.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Top seeds advance in Coconut Classic

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Action in the 2009 Coconut Class Tennis Tournament continued Sunday with 28 singles matches and 15 doubles games played at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

After majority of the players in the boys' 14-and-under division drew byes in the first round on Saturday, games heated up Sunday with eight netters moving into the quarterfinals.

Top two seeds Rafael Jones and Christian Miller led the list of quarterfinalists after beating Chris Park, 8-6, and Seiya Eda, 8-1, respectively. Park advanced against Jones after topping John Cano in the first round, while Eda won his debut against Peter Lee, 8-2.

Completing the quarterfinals cast were Andrew Johnson, Lucas Nutting, Chris Cajigan, Clay McCullough-Stearns, Jake Lee, and Angelo Jones.

Johnson prevailed over Daniel Park, 8-6, Nutting and Cajigan won via walkovers, McCullough-Stearns nipped Tom Choi, 8-6, and Angelo crushed Dylan Ackerman, 8-3.

In the boys' 18-and-under, three had already nailed semis slots, namely Woo Suk Chang, Nathan Nutting, and Sung Hoon Ham.

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Three get NMASA nod for January

Staal

Oshima-Berger

Mancao

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Three athletes were named top performers for January during the Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association's monthly meeting at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium Thursday night.

Voted Male and Female

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